Martha Kent
East Dereham
Dec.r 26. 1773.

Sarah Elizabeth
Kent August [illegible]

BRITISH MUSEUM
15
61
JUN

THE

HISTORY

OF

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MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS

VOL. III.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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THE HISTORY OF MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

CHAP. I.

Relates only to ſuch things, as the reader may reaſonably expect would happen.

AS much taken up, as Miſs Betſy was, with the pleaſure of having gained a new admirer, ſhe could not forbear, after ſhe came home, making ſome reflection on the value of her conqueſt; — ſhe had found nothing agreeable, either in his perſon, or converſation: — the

firſt ſeemed to her ſtiff and aukward, and looked, as if not made for his cloaths; and the latter, weak, romantic, and bombaſt: — in fine, he was altogether ſuch as ſhe could not think of living with as a huſband, though the rank and figure ſhe was told he held in the world, made her willing to receive him as a lover. — In ſhort, though ſhe could not conſent to ſacrifice herſelf to his quality, ſhe took a pride to ſacrifice his quality, to her vanity.

No overtures of marriage having been made to her ſince Mr. Munden began his courtſhip, and that gentleman growing, as ſhe fancied at leaſt, a little too preſuming, on finding himſelf the only lover, ſhe was not a little pleaſed at the opportunity of giving him a rival, whoſe quality might over-awe his hopes. — In this idea, ſhe was far from repenting her behaviour towards him the night before: but how little ſoever ſhe regarded what mortification ſhe gave the men, ſhe always took care to treat her own ſex with a great deal of politeneſs; and reflecting, that ſhe had been guilty of an omiſſion, in not ſending her ſervant to excuſe herſelf to the ladies, who expected her, went herſelf in the morning to make her own apology.

In

In the mean time, Mr. Munden, who it is certain was very much out of humour, and impatient to let her know ſome part of the ſentiments her meſſage had inſpired him with, came to make her a morning viſit, having ſome buſineſs, which he knew would detain him from waiting on her in the afternoon. — On finding ſhe was abroad, he deſired the maid to favour him with her lady's ſtandiſh, which ſhe accordingly bringing to him, he ſat down, and without taking much conſideration, wrote the following letter, and left for her on the table.

To Miſs Betsy Thoughtless.

'Madam,

'AMIDST the enchanting encouragement, with which you have been pleaſed 'to admit my ſervices, I could not, without calling your honour and generoſity 'in queſtion, be altogether void of hope, 'that you intended to afford them one 'day, a recompence more ample than a 'bare acceptance.

'Judge then of my ſurpriſe, at the 'repulſe I met with at Mrs. Modely's 'door. — I could not think it any breach 'of the reſpect I owe you, to call on you

'at the houſe of your mantua-maker: '— I could not imagine it poſſible for 'you to have any engagements at ſuch 'a place capable of preventing you 'from keeping thoſe, that you had 'made with perſons for whom you 'profeſs an eſteem: ——— on the 'contrary, I rather expected you would 'have permitted me to conduct you 'thence, with the ſame readineſs you 'have done from moſt of the other places 'where you have been, ſince I firſt had 'the honour of being acquainted with 'you.

'I know very well, that it is the duty 'of every lover to ſubmit, in all things, 'to the pleaſure of the beautiful object, 'whoſe chains he wears; — yet, Madam, 'as you have hitherto made mine eaſy, 'you muſt pardon me, when I ſay, this 'ſudden tranſition from gentleneſs to 'cruelty, appears to me to contain a 'myſtery, which, though I dread, I am 'diſtracted for the explanation of.

'Some buſineſs of great moment pre- 'vents my waiting on you this after- 'noon, but ſhall attend your commands 'to morrow at the uſual hour, when I 'ſtill flatter myſelf, you will relieve the 'anxieties,

'anxieties, and put an end to the ſuſpence 'of him, who is,

'With the greateſt ſincerity of heart,

'MADAM,

'Your moſt humble,

'And moſt faithfully devoted ſervant,

'G. MUNDEN.'

Miſs Betſy, at her return home, found alſo another billet directed for her, which they told her, had been brought by a ſervant belonging to Sir Frederick Fineer; —ſhe gave that from Mr. Munden, however, the preference of reading firſt, not indeed through choice, but chance, that happening to be firſt put into her hands. —As ſoon as ſhe had looked it over, ſhe laughed, and ſaid to herſelf, 'The poor 'man is jealous already, though he knows 'not of whom, or why;—what will be-'come of him when he ſhall be con-'vinced?—I ſuppoſe he was ſure of hav-'ing me, and 'tis high time to mortify 'his vanity.'

She then proceeded to Sir Frederick's epiſtle, in which ſhe found herſelf more

deify'd than ever ſhe had been by all her lovers put together.

To the nonpariel of her ſex, the incomparable Miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'DIVINE CHARMER,

'THOUGH I deſigned myſelf the 'inexpreſſible pleaſure of kiſſing your 'fair hands this evening, I could not 'exiſt 'till then without telling you how 'much I adore you: —— you are the 'empreſs of my heart, — the goddeſs of 'my ſoul; — the one loves you with the 'moſt loyal and obedient paſſion, — the 'other regards you as the ſole mover, 'and director of all its motions. — I can-'not live without you, — it is you alone 'can make me bleſt, or miſerable. — O 'then pronounce my doom, and keep 'me not ſuſpended between heaven and 'hell. —Words cannot deſcribe the ar-'dency of my flame; — it is actions 'only that can do it. ---- I lay myſelf, and 'all that I am worth, an humble offer-'ing at your feet. ----- Accept it, I be-'ſeech you, but accept it ſoon; for I 'conſume away, in the fire of my im-'patient wiſhes, and, in a very ſhort 'time, there will be nothing left for 'you,

'you, but the ſhadow of the man, who 'is,

'With the moſt pure devotion,

'MADAM,

'Your beauty's ſlave,

'And everlaſting adorer,

'F. FINEER.'

'Good lack,' cried Miſs Betſy, 'he 'is in a great haſte too, but I fancy he 'muſt wait a while, as many of better 'ſenſe have done.---What a romantic jar-'gon is here? ---- One would think he 'had been conſulting all the ballads ſince 'fair Roſamond, and the children in the 'wood, for fine phraſes to melt me into 'pity!'

She wondered, as indeed ſhe had good reaſon, that a man of his birth, and who it muſt be ſuppoſed had an education ſuitable to it, ſhould expreſs himſelf in ſuch odd terms; but then ſhe was tempted to imagine, that it was only his over-care to pleaſe her, had made him ſtretch his wit beyond its natural extent, and that if he had loved her leſs, he would have been able to have told her ſo in a much better ſtile. ---- Poſſeſſed with this fancy, ---- 'What a ridiculous thing this 'love is!' ſaid ſhe; 'What extrava-

'gancies does it ſometimes make men 'guilty of! ---- yet one never ſees this 'madneſs in them after they become huſ-'bands; ---- if I were to marry Sir Fre-'derick, I do not doubt but he would 'ſoon recover his ſenſes.'

How does a mind, unbroke with cares and diſappointments, entirely free from paſſion, and perfectly at peace with itſelf, and with the world, improve, and dwell on every thing, that affords the leaſt matter for its entertainment? ---- This gay young lady found as much diverſion in anticipating the innocent pranks ſhe intended to play with the authors of theſe two letters, as an infant does in firſt playing with a new baby, and afterwards plucking it to pieces; ſo true is the obſervation of the poet, that

'All are but children of a larger growth.'

But this ſprightlineſs of humour in Miſs Betſy, ſoon received a ſad and ſudden interruption ---- having ſent, as ſhe conſtantly did every day, to enquire after the health of Mr. Goodman, her ſervant returned with an account, that he had expired that morning. ---- Though this was an event, which ſhe, and all who knew him, had expected for ſome time, yet

yet could ſhe not be told of the death of a gentleman, under whoſe care and protection ſhe ſo long had been, and who had behaved, in all reſpects, ſo like a parent towards her, without being very deeply affected with the news;----ſhe was then at dinner, but threw down her knife and fork, roſe from the table, and retired to her chamber and wept bitterly;---- the more violent emotions of grief were ſoon aſſwaged, but her melancholy and dejection of ſpirits continued much longer, and while it did ſo, ſhe had the power of making the moſt juſt reflections on the vain purſuits, the fleeting pleaſures, and all the noiſe and hurry of the giddy world.--- Love, and all the impertinencies which bear that name, now appeared only worthy her contempt; and recollecting, that Sir Frederick had mentioned viſiting her that evening, ſhe ſent a ſervant immediately to Mrs. Modely's, deſiring her to acquaint that gentleman, that ſhe had juſt loſt a very dear friend, and was in too much affliction to admit of any company.

This being the day, on which Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs was expected to be in London, this affectionate ſiſter perceiving, by his laſt letter to her, that his health was not perfectly eſtabliſhed, was

under a very great concern, leſt he ſhould be put to ſome inconvenience by Mr. Goodman's death, for a proper lodging on his firſt arrival; but ſhe ſoon found her tender fears, on this occaſion, altogether groundleſs.

Thoſe objections, which had hindered Mr. Thomas Thoughtleſs from taking her into his family, had not the ſame weight in relation to Mr. Francis, whoſe ſex ſet him above medling with thoſe domeſtic concerns, the command of which he had given to another, and his reputation would ſuffer nothing by being under the roof with the miſtreſs of his brother's amorous inclinations.

He went to the inn where he knew the L————e ſtage puts up, — welcomed Mr. Francis with open arms, as ſoon as he alighted from the coach, and gave him all the demonſtrations of brotherly affection, that the place they were in would admit of; then conducted him to his houſe, and inſiſted that he ſhould not think of any other home, 'till he was better provided for, and ſettled in the world.

A ſervant, belonging to the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs, was immediately diſpatched to

to Miſs Betſy, with a letter from the younger, and it was from this man that ſhe received the agreeable intelligence, that the two brothers were together.—— The terms in which Mr. Francis wrote to her were theſe :

To Miſs Betsy Thoughtless.

'My dear ſiſter,

"HEAVEN be thanked I am at laſt 'got ſafe to London; ——— a place, 'which, I aſſure you, ſome months ago 'I almoſt deſpaired of ever ſeeing more. 'My brother has juſt given me an ac-'count of the death of honeſt Mr. Good-'man, and, as I doubt not but you are 'very much concerned, as indeed we 'have all reaſon to be, for the loſs of 'ſo ſincere and valuable a friend, I am 'very impatient to ſee you, and give 'you what conſolation is in my power; 'but the fatigue of my journey, after ſo 'long an illneſs, requires my taking ſome 'immediate repoſe; — I ſhall, however, 'wait on you to-morrow morning, 'till 'when, believe me, as ever,

'With the greateſt ſincerity,

'Dear ſiſter,

'Your affectionate brother,

'And humble ſervant,

'F. Thoughtless."

'P. S. My brother purpoſes to come with 'me, but if any thing ſhould happen 'to prevent his viſit, you may depend 'on one from me.—Once more, my dear ſiſter, good night.

In the preſent ſituation of Miſs Betſy's mind, ſhe could not have received a more ſenſible ſatisfaction, than what ſhe felt on this young gentleman's arrival; but what enſued upon it will in due time and place appear.

CHAP. II.

Contains only ſome few particulars of little moment in themſelves, but ſerve to uſher in matters of more importance.

MR. Goodman, who both living and dying, had ſincerely at heart the welfare of all with whom he had any concern, could not content himſelf to leave the world, without giving to thoſe, who had been under his care, ſuch advice as he thought neceſſary for their future happineſs.

Accord-

Accordingly, the day preceeding that which happened to be his laſt, he ſent for Mr. Thoughtleſs, and on his being come, and ſeated by his bedſide, he took his hand, and began to remonſtrate to him, in the moſt pathetic, though very gentle, terms, how unjuſtifiable to the eyes of heaven, how diſreputable to thoſe of the world, it was, to avow and indulge, in the public manner he did, an unwarrantable flame.

'I never was ſevere,' ſaid he, 'in cen-
'ſuring the frailties of youth and nature;
'but think the claim they have to pardon
'conſiſts chiefly in an endeavour to con-
'ceal them; —— when gloried in, they
'loſe the name of frailties, and become
'vices: —— beſides, others by our ex-
'ample might be emboldened to offend,
'and if ſo, what are we but acceſſary to
'their faults, and anſwerable for them, as
'well as for our own? — 'You are at
'preſent,' continued he, 'the head of
'your family, — have a large eſtate, —
'are young,—handſome,—accompliſhed;
'—in fine, have all the requiſites to make
a ſhining character in life, and to be a ſer-
'vice, and an honour to your country.
'— How great a pity would it be,
'that ſuch a ſtock of fortune's bleſſings,
—ſuch

'— ſuch preſent benefits, and ſuch glo-
'rious expectations, ſhould all be ſquan-
'dered in the purchaſe of one guilty
'pleaſure.'

He then proceeded to a ſhort diſcuſſion of the difference of a lawful and an unlawful communication between the ſexes; —— he expatiated on the wiſe and laudable inſtitution of marriage; — the ſolid comforts ariſing from that ſtate, in the choice of a worthy partner; — the many advantages of an honourable alliance; — the ſerene and laſting peaſures to be found in the ſociety of a faithful, diſcreet, and endearing companion.—A wife,'—ſaid he, with a ſigh, which the memory of his own hard fate drew from him, 'may ſometimes
'be bad, but a miſtreſs we are ſure is never
'good; — her very character denies all
'confidence to be repoſed in her; —
'it is the intereſt of a wife to ſecure the
'honour of her huſband, becauſe ſhe
'muſt ſuffer in his diſgrace; -- a miſtreſs
'having no reputation of her own, re-
'gards not that of her keeper. --- It is
'the intereſt of a wife to be frugal of
'her huſband's ſubſtance, becauſe ſhe muſt
'be a ſharer in thoſe misfortunes, which
'the want of œconomy creates; -- but
'it is the intereſt of a miſtreſs to ſell
'her favours as dear as ſhe can, and

'to

'to make the beſt proviſion ſhe can for 'herſelf, becauſe her ſubſiſtence is precarious, and depends wholly on the 'will of him who ſupports her. ---- 'Theſe, my dear friend,' continued he, 'are truths, which I hope you will not 'wait for experience to convince you 'of.'

It is probable Mr. Thoughtleſs did not reliſh this admonition;---he ſeemed, however, to take it in good part, and returned for anſwer, that he ſhould ever retain the moſt grateful ſenſe of the kind concern he expreſſed for him, and added, that whatever inconveniencies he might have been hurried into, by an inadvertent paſſion, he ſhould always take care not to become the dupe of any woman.

Mr. Goodman then fell into ſome diſcourſe concerning the younger Mr. Thoughtleſs, and the elder telling him, that, by his intereſt, he procured a commiſſion for him on very eaſy terms, that worthy old gentleman appeared very much pleaſed, and ſaid, he hoped they would always live together in that perfect amity which both good policy and nature demands between perſons of the ſame blood.

'And

'And now,' continued he, "I have 'but one thing more to recommend to 'you, --- and that is in relation to your 'ſiſter, Miſs Betſy :---I doubt not of her 'innocence, but I fear her conduct ; --- 'her youth, --- her beauty, --- the gaiety 'of her temper, and the little vanities of 'her ſex, are every day expoſing her to 'temptations fatal to reputation ; --- I 'wiſh, therefore, ſhe were well married ; '---I know not how the courtſhip of Mr. 'Trueworth happened to be broke off, 'perhaps on ſome trifling occaſion either 'on the one or the other ſide : --- if ſo, 'tis likely Mr. Francis, when he comes 'to town, may bring about a reconcilia-'tion. — According to my judgment of 'mankind, ſhe cannot make a more de-'ſerving choice. — There is another 'gentleman, who now makes his addreſſes 'to her,— his name is Munden ; — but I 'know nothing of his character, — he 'never applied to me, nor did ſhe conſult 'me on the affair ; — it will however be 'a brother's part in you to enquire how 'far he may be worthy of her.'

Perceiving Mr. Thoughtleſs liſtened to him with a good deal of attention, he went on ;—'I ſhould alſo think it right,' ſaid he,

he, 'that while ſhe remains in a ſingle 'ſtate, ſhe ſhould be boarded in ſome ſo-'cial, reputable family;——I do not like 'this living by herſelf,—her humour is 'too volatile to endure ſolitude; ſhe muſt 'have her amuſements; and the want of 'them at home, naturally carries her in 'ſearch of them abroad:—I could wiſh,' 'added he, 'that you would tell her what 'I have ſaid to you on this ſubject; ſhe is 'convinced I am her friend, I believe has 'ſome regard for me, and it may be, my 'dying admonitions will have greater 'effect upon her, than all ſhe has heard 'from me before.'

Mr. Goodman, after this, beginning to grow extremely faint, and altogether unable to hold any farther diſcourſe, the brother of Miſs Betſy judged it convenient to retire, aſſuring the other, as he took his leave, that no part of what he had ſaid, ſhould be loſt upon him.

Though the promiſe he had made Mr. Goodman was chiefly dictated by his complaiſance, yet it was not totally forgot after he had left him.—As to what that worthy gentleman had ſaid, in relation to his own manner of living, he thought he had talked well, but he had talked like an old man

man, and that it was time enough for him to part with his pleaſures, when he had no longer any inclination to purſue them;—but what had been alledged to him concerning his ſiſter's conduct, made a much deeper impreſſion on his mind:—he conſidered, that the honour of a family depended greatly on the female part of it, and therefore reſolved to omit nothing in his power, to prevent Miſs Betſy from being caught by any ſnares, that might be laid to entrap her innocence.

He communicated to Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs on his arrival, all that Mr. Goodman had ſaid to him on this ſcore, and his own ſentiments upon it:—that young gentleman was entirely of his brother's opinion in this point, and they both agreed, that marriage was the only ſure refuge from temptation, for a young woman of Miſs Betſy's diſpoſition and humour.—They had a very long and pretty ſerious converſation on this head, the reſult of which was that they ſhould go together to her, and each exert all the influence he had over her, in order to draw from her ſome farther eclairciſement of her intentions, than could yet be gathered from her behaviour.

Miſs

Miſs Betſy, who little ſuſpected their deſign, received them with all the tenderneſs that could be expected from a ſiſter, eſpecially her brother Frank, whoſe return after ſo long an abſence, gave her in reality an entire ſatisfaction; but ſhe had ſcarce time to give him all the welcomes, with which her heart overflowed, before the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs fell on the topic of Mr. Goodman, and the misfortune they ſuſtained, in the loſs of ſo good a friend; after which, 'He has left you a legacy, 'ſiſter,' ſaid he:—'A legacy!' cried ſhe, 'pray of what kind?' 'Such a one,' replied he, 'as perhaps you will not be 'very well pleaſed in receiving, nor would 'I chuſe to deliver it, but for two rea-'ſons;—firſt, that the injunctions of a 'dying friend are not to be diſpenſed 'with; and ſecondly, that it is of a na-'ture, I fear, you ſtand in too much need 'of,'

Miſs Betſy, whoſe ready wit made her preſently comprehend the meaning of theſe words, replied with ſome ſmartneſs, that whatever ſhe ſtood in need of, ſhe ſhould certainly receive with pleaſure, and he might have ſpared himſelf the trouble of a prelude, for any thing that could be de-

livered

livered by him, or bequeathed to her by Mr. Goodman.

He then told her, how that gentleman, the day before his death, had ſent for him, 'For no other purpoſe,' ſaid he, 'than 'to talk to me on your account; and to 'exhort me as your brother, and now 'your guardian, to have a watchful eye 'over all your actions; --- to remind you 'of ſome inadvertencies of the paſt, and 'to warn you againſt falling into the like 'for the future: --- ſorry I am, to find 'myſelf under a neceſſity of ſpeaking to 'you in this manner; but harſh as it may 'ſeem at preſent, I doubt not, but you 'will hereafter own, is a proof of the 'greateſt affection I could ſhew you.' He then repeated to her, all that Mr. Goodman had ſaid to him, in relation to her; to which he alſo added many things of his own, which he thought might ſerve to ſtrengthen, and to enforce the arguments made uſe of by the other.

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the various and diſturbed emotions, which diſcovered themſelves in the countenance of Miſs Betſy, during the whole time her brother was ſpeaking; --- ſhe looked extremely grave, at the manner in which he uſhered what he had to deliver to her from Mr. Good-

Goodman, — appeared confounded and perplexed at what ſhe heard that gentleman had ſaid concerning Mr. Trueworth, —was quite peeviſh at the mention of Mr. Munden, but when told of the dangers to which ſhe was expoſed, by living alone, and truſted with the management of herſelf, her eyes ſparkled with diſdain and rage, at a remonſtrance ſhe looked upon as ſo unneceſſary and ſo unjuſt.

If this meſſage had been ſent to her by any other, than Mr. Goodman, whoſe memory, on account of the benefits ſhe had received from him, was precious to her; or had it been repeated by any other mouth than that of a brother, ſhe had certainly vented the indignation ſhe was poſſeſſed of, in the moſt bitter terms; but gratitude, reſpect, and love, denying her this remedy, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, —'Good God!' cried ſhe, 'what have 'I done to raiſe ſuch cruel ſuggeſtions in 'the heart of any friend! — Which of 'my actions can malice conſtrue into a 'crime? — I challenge my worſt of 'enemies to prove me guilty of any thing 'that might juſtly caſt a blemiſh on my 'reputation, much leſs to call my virtue 'in queſtion.'

The

The two brothers ſeemed very much moved at the agonies that they ſaw her in, eſpecially the elder, who repenting he had gone ſo far, took her in his arms, and tenderly embracing her, 'My dear ſiſter,' ſaid he, 'you wrong your friends, while 'you imagine yourſelf wronged by them; '— your reputation, I hope, is clear; '— your virtue not ſuſpected; — it is 'not to accuſe you of any guilt, but to 'prevent your innocence from becoming 'a prey to the guilt of others, that Mr. 'Goodman ſent you his dying admoni-'tion, or that I took upon me to deliver 'it.'

Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs ſeconded what the other had ſaid, and both joining their endeavours to pacify the late tempeſt of her mind, ſhe ſoon recovered that good humour and chearfulneſs, which was too natural to her to be long ſuſpended by any accident whatever.

'I flattered myſelf,' ſaid the younger of theſe gentlemen, that cautions of this 'kind would have been altogether unne-'ceſſary, and that before now you would 'have been diſpoſed of to a man, under 'whoſe protection all that is dear to your 'ſex had been ſecure; — I need not tell you

'you,' continued he, 'that I mean Mr. 'Trueworth.

Miſs Betſy looking a little confuſed, and not making any reply, the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs immediately took up the word, and ſaid, he had heard ſo high a character of that gentleman's merit, that he had wiſhed for a few things with more ardency, than the honour of being allied to him, and that he never could find out what objection his ſiſter had, to accept of an offer ſo every way to her advantage.

To this Miſs Betſy made anſwer, tho' not without ſome diſorder, and heſitation in her ſpeech,---that ſhe had never made any objection, either to his perſon or qualifications; --- but that ſhe did not care to marry yet a while, and he had not love enough to wait the event of her reſolution in that point; --- that, beſides, their humours did not ſuit, and there was little likelihood they would agree better after marriage; --- that there had been a little pique between them;---that he gave himſelf airs of reſenting ſomething ſhe had ſaid, and thereupon had ſent her a very impertinent letter, ſince which ſhe had never ſeen him;--- 'ſo that,' added ſhe, 'our 'breaking off acquaintance is wholly 'owing to himſelf.

Mr.

Mr. Francis not doubting but this letter would explain what he ſo much deſired to know the truth of, cried out to her haſtily to let him ſee it;--- Miſs Betſy already repented that ſhe had mentioned ſuch a thing, as ſhe was conſcious there were ſome expreſſions in it, which would greatly countenance the diſagreeable remonſtrances ſhe had juſt now received; but ſhe wanted artifice to pretend ſhe had either loſt, or burnt it, and went that inſtant to her cabinet, where eaſily finding it, ſhe gave it into her brothers hands, with theſe words, 'he reproaches me,' ſaid ſhe, with 'things I know nothing of, and in terms, 'which, I think, do not very well become 'the paſſion he pretended to have for 'me.'

'That he once loved you,' ſaid Mr. Francis coolly, 'I am very certain;--- 'how his ſentiments may be changed, and 'the reaſons of their being ſo, this may 'perhaps, give me room to gueſs.' He then read the letter aloud, and while he was doing ſo, ſeveral times caſt a look at Miſs Betſy, which ſhewed he was highly diſſatisfied with her, for having given any cauſe for the reflections contained in it.

'I

" I ſee very well, ſaid he, returning her ' the letter, that he has done with you, and ' that it is your own fault: — I ſhall, ' however, talk to him on the affair, and ' if there be a poſſibility of accommodating ' matters between you, ſhall endeavour it ' for your ſake.'

Here Miſs Betſy's ſpirit rouſed itſelf, in ſpite of the reſpect ſhe had for her brothers; ' I beſeech you, ſir, ſaid ſhe to ' Mr. Francis, not to go about to force ' your ſiſter upon any man; — if Mr. ' Trueworth, of his own accord, renews ' the profeſſions he has made, I ſhall on ' your account receive them as I did before ' any miſunderſtanding happened between ' us; but as to changing my condition, ' either in favour of him or any other ' man, I know not when, or whether ever ' I ſhall be in the humour to do it; you ' may, however, if you pleaſe, continued ' ſhe, hear what he has to ſay for himſelf, ' and what mighty matters againſt me, ' that can excuſe the abrupt manner of his ' quitting me.'

' I know not as yet,' replied Mr. Francis, with ſome vehemence, ' whether I ' ſhall interfere any farther in the thing, ' and am heartily ſorry I have given

'myſelf any trouble about it, ſince you ſo 'little conſider your own intereſt, or will 'follow the advice of thoſe who are at 'the pains to conſider for you.'—'Come, 'come, ſaid the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs, 'you are both too fiery;—I am con-'fident my ſiſter has too much good ſenſe 'to ſuffer any little caprice to impede her 'real happineſs,——— therefore, prithee 'Frank, let us drop this ſubject at pre-'ſent, and leave her to her own reflec-'tions.'

To which Miſs Betſy anſwered, that there required but little reflection to inſtruct her what ſhe ought to do, and that though ſhe could not conſent to be kept always in leading-ſtrings, the love and reſpect ſhe had for her brothers, would never permit her to do any thing without their approbation. There paſſed nothing more of conſequence between them at this viſit; but what had been ſaid ſerved to engroſs pretty much the minds of each of them after they were ſeparated.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Has ſomewhat more buſineſs in it than the former.

THOUGH Miſs Betſy was very conſcious of the merits of Mr. Trueworth, and equally convinced of the friendſhip her brother Francis had for him, and had therefore doubted not, but when that young gentleman ſhould arrive, he would reaſon ſtrongly with her, on the little regard ſhe had paid to his recommendations, or the advantages of the alliance he had propoſed; yet ſhe did not expect the ſatisfaction of their firſt meeting would have been imbittered, by a reſentment, ſuch, as it ſeemed to her, he had teſtified on the occaſion.

She eaſily perceived the two brothers had conſulted together, before they came to her, in what manner they ſhould behave towards her; and this ſhe looked upon as a ſort of proof, that they intended to aſſume an authority over her, to which they had no claim. —— 'The love I have for 'them, ſaid ſhe to herſelf, will always 'make me take a pleaſure in obliging

'them, and doing every thing they deſire 'of me; but they are entirely miſtaken, 'if they imagine it in their power to awe 'me into compliance with their injunc-'tions.'

'And yet, cried ſhe again, what other 'aim than my happineſs and intereſt can 'they propoſe to themſelves, in deſiring 'to have me under their direction? —— 'Poor Frank has given me proofs, that 'I am very dear to him, and, I be-'lieve, my brother Thoughtleſs is not 'wanting in natural affection for me; 'why then ſhould I reject the council 'of two friends, whoſe ſincerity there is 'not a poſſibility of ſuſpecting.——— 'They know their ſex, and the dangers 'to which ours are expoſed, by the arti-'fices of baſe deſigning men: — I have 'had ſome eſcapes, which I ought always 'to remember enough to keep me from 'falling into the like ugly accident again; '—how near was I to everlaſting ruin, by 'ſlighting the warning given me by Mr. 'Trueworth!'

This reflection bringing into her mind many paſſages of her behaviour towards that gentleman, ſhe could not forbear juſtifying his conduct, and condemning her own: —— 'I have certainly uſed me ill,

'ill, purſued ſhe, with a ſigh, and if he 'ſhould return, and forgive what is paſt, 'I think I ought, in gratitude, to reward 'his love!'

She was in this contemplating mood when her ſervant told her, that Mrs. Modely had been to wait upon her, but on hearing her brothers were with her, went away, ſaying, ſhe would come again, which ſhe now was, and begged to ſpeak with her.

Miſs Betſy was in this moment juſt beginning to feel ſome ſort of pleaſure in the idea of Mr. Trueworth's renewing his addreſſes, and was a little peeviſh at the interruption: —ſhe ordered, however, that the woman ſhould come up, — 'Well, Mrs. 'Modely,' ſaid ſhe, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw her enter, 'what ſtuff have you brought me 'now?'

'Ah, charming Miſs Betſy, replied ſhe, 'you fine ladies, and great fortunes, 'think you may do any thing with the 'men: — poor Sir Frederick will break 'his heart, or run mad, that's to be ſure, 'if you don't ſend him a favourable anſwer 'to this letter.' — In ſpeaking theſe words, ſhe delivered a letter to Miſs Betſy, which that young lady opened with a careleſ

careleſs air, and it contained theſe high-flown lines:

'This humbly to be preſented to the
'moſt beautiful of all beauties, the
'ſuper-excellent Miſs BETSY
'THOUGHTLESS.

'Adorable Creature,

'I AM grieved to the very ſoul to 'hear you have any ſubject for affliction, 'but am very certain, that in being de-'prived of your divine preſence, I endure 'a more mortal ſtab than any loſs you have 'ſuſtained can poſſibly inflict. — I am 'conſumed with the fire of my paſſion: '— I have taken neither repoſe, nor food, 'ſince firſt I ſaw you:—I have lived only 'on the idea of your charms: —— Oh! 'nouriſh me with the ſubſtance!—— Hide 'me in your boſom from the fould fiend 'deſpair, that is juſt ready to lay hold 'on me.

'The paſſion I am poſſeſſed of for you 'is not like that of other men;—I cannot 'wait the tedious forms of courtſhip;— 'there is no medium between death and 'the enjoyment of you; — the circle of 'your arms, or a cold leaden ſhroud: — 'the one or the other muſt very ſhortly be 'my portion. — But I depend upon the

'Heaven

'Heaven of your mercy, and hope you 'will permit me to pour forth the abun-'dance of my ſoul before you,—to baſk 'in the ſunſhine of your ſmiles, and to 'try, at leaſt, if no ſpark of that amo-'rous flame, which burns me up, has dart-'ed upon you, and kindled you into ſoft 'deſires.

'O! if any part of my impatient fires, 'by ſecret ſympathy, ſhould happily have 'reached your breaſt, never was there a 'pair ſo tranſcendently bleſt as we ſhould 'be. — The thought is rapture!— extaſy 'too big for words! — too mighty for 'deſcription! — and I muſt therefore, 'for a few hours, defer any further en-'deavours to convince you. ——'till when 'I remain,

'Abſorbed in the delightful image,
'Dear quinteſſence of joy,
'Your moſt devoted,
'Moſt obſequious,
'And moſt adoring vaſſal,

'F. FINEER.'

In ſpite of the ſerious humour Miſs Betſy was in, ſhe could not read this without burſting into a violent fit of laughter; but ſoon compoſing himſelf, 'If I had 'not ſeen the author of this epiſtle,

ſaid ſhe to Mrs. Modely, 'I ſhould 'have thought it had been ſent me by 'ſome ſchool-boy, and was the firſt 'eſſay of deſcribing a paſſion he had heard 'talked of, and was ambitious of being 'ſuppoſed capable of feeling,—but ſure, 'continued ſhe, the man muſt be either 'mad, or moſt impudently vain, to write 'to me, as if he imagined I was in love 'with him, and would have him on his 'firſt putting the queſtion to me.'

'Ah, my dear madam, ſaid Mrs. 'Modely, do you conſider, that a young 'gentleman of ten thouſand a year in 'poſſeſſion, as much more in reverſion, 'and the expectation of a coronet, is apt 'to think he may have any body?'—'If 'he does, he may find himſelf miſtaken,' replied Miſs Betſy haughtily, and then in the ſame breath ſoftening her voice, 'but 'are you ſure, cried ſhe, that he has ſo 'much?'———'Sure, madam!' ſaid Mrs. Modely, 'aye, as ſure as that I am 'alive;—I have heard it from twenty 'people:—they ſay he has a houſe in 'the country as big as a town, and above 'fifty ſervants in it;—though he is but 'juſt come to London, and has not had 'time to ſettle his equipage as yet, but 'he has beſpoke the fineſt coach, and

'the

'the genteeleſt chariot you ever ſaw, — 'all in a new taſte, and perfectly French; '—they are quite finiſhed, all but the 'painting, and that only waits 'till he 'knows whether he may quarter your 'arms or not.'

'Bleſs me! cried Miſs Betſy, does he 'think to gain me in the time of painting 'a coach?' — 'Nay, I don't know, an-'ſwered Mrs. Modely; but I think ſuch 'an offer is not to be trifled with; — he 'is violently in love with you, that is 'certain: —he does not deſire a penny of 'your fortune, and will ſettle upon you, 'notwithſtanding, his whole eſtate, if you 'require it.'

Miſs Betſy made no anſwer, but pauſed for a conſiderable time, and ſeemed, as it were, in a profound reſverie: — at laſt coming out of it, — 'He is for doing 'things in ſuch a hurry, ſaid ſhe; — I 'have ſeen him no more than once, and 'ſcarce know what ſort of a perſon he 'is, — how then can I tell, whether I ever 'ſhall be able to bring myſelf to like him 'or not?'

'You may give him leave to wait on 'you however,' cried the other. — Here Miſs Betſy was again ſilent for ſome mo-

ments; but Mrs. Modely repeating her requeſt, and enforcing it with ſome arguments, — 'Well then, replied ſhe, I ſhall 'not go to church this afternoon, and 'will ſee him if he comes; — but dear 'Modely, continued ſhe, don't let him 'aſſume on the permiſſion I give him, '— tell him, you had all the difficulty 'in the world to prevail on me to do it; 'for, in my mind, he already hopes too 'much, and fears too little, for a man 'ſo prodigiouſly in love.'—Mrs. Modely on this aſſured her, ſhe might truſt to her management, and took her leave, very well pleaſed with the ſucceſs of her negociation.

We often ſee the love of grandeur prevail over perſons of the ripeſt years, and knowledge. — What guilty lengths have not ſome men run to attain it, even among thoſe, who have been eſteemed the wiſeſt, and moſt honeſt of their time, when once a title, a bit of ribband croſs their ſhoulder, or any other gew-gaw trophy of the favour of a court has been hung out, how has their virtue veered and yielded to the temptation? — It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that a young heart unexperienced in the fallacy of ſhow ſhould be dazzled with the tinſel glitter: — the good ſenſe of Miſs Betſy made

made her ſee, that this laſt triumph of her charms, was a vain, ſilly and affected coxcomb; but then this coxcomb had a vaſt eſtate, and the enchanting ideas of the figure ſhe ſhould make, if in poſſeſſion of it, in ſome meaſure out-balanced the contempt ſhe had of the owner's perſon, and underſtanding.

The glare of pomp and equipage, the pleaſure of having it in her power of taking the upper-hand of thoſe of her own rank, and of vying with thoſe of a more exalted one, it is certain had very potent charms for her; but then there was a delicacy in her nature, that would not ſuffer the deſire of attaining it to be altogether predominant: —— the thoughts of being ſacrificed to a man for whom it was impoſſible for her to have either love, or eſteem; — to be obliged to yield that through duty, which inclination ſhuddered at, ſtruck a ſudden damp to all the riſing fires of pride and ambition in her ſoul, and convinced her, that greatneſs would be too dearly purchaſed at the expence of peace.

In fine, ſhe conſider'd on theſe things ſo long, that ſhe grew weary of conſidering at all, ſo reſolved to let the matter reſt,— give herſelf no farther pain, — leave to

chance the diſpoſal of her fate, and treat all her lovers as ſhe hitherto had done, only as ſubjects of mere amuſement.

She was now beginning to pleaſe herſelf with the thoughts how Mr. Munden, whom ſhe expected that evening, would behave at the ſight of his new rival, and how Sir Frederick Fineer would bear the preſence of a man, whom ſhe was reſolved to ſhew him had the ſame pretenſions as himſelf;—but tho' ſhe happened to be diſappointed in her expectation in this, ſhe did not want other ſufficient matter for her diverſion.

Sir Frederick, to ſhew the impatience of his paſſion, came very ſoon after dinner;—ſhe received him with as grave an air as ſhe could poſſibly put on, but it was not in her power, nor indeed would have been in any one's elſe, to continue it for any long time:—his converſation was much of a piece with his letters, and his actions even more extravagant.

Never was ſuch an Orlando Furioſo in love;— on his firſt approach, he had indeed the boldneſs to take one of her hands, and put it to his mouth, but afterwards whatever he ſaid to her was on his knees;----he threw himſelf proſtrate on the

the carpet before her, graſp'd her feet, and tenderly kiſſed each ſhoe, with the ſame vehemence, as he could have done her lips, and as much devotion as the pilgrims at Rome do the pantofle of his Holineſs.—Darts!—Flames!—Immortal joys!—Death!—Deſpair!—Heaven! Hell!—ever-during woe; and all the epithets in the whole vocabulary of Cupid's legend, begun and ended every ſentence of his diſcourſe.—This way of entertaining her was ſo extraordinary, and ſo new to her, that ſhe could not forbear ſometimes returning it with a ſmile; which, in ſpite of her endeavours to preſerve a ſerious deportment, diffuſed a gaiety through all her air.

Thoſe who had told Sir Frederick, that the way to pleaſe this lady, was to ſooth her vanity, either knew not, or had forgot to inform him, ſhe had alſo an equal ſhare of good ſenſe; ſo that miſtaking the change he had obſerved in her looks for an indication of her being charmed with his manner of behaviour, he acted and reacted over all his fopperies, and felt as much ſecret pride in repeating them, as a celebrated ſinger on the ſtage does in obeying the voice of an encore.

It is probable, however, that he would have continued in them long enough to have tired Miſs Betſy, ſo much, as to have made her give him ſome demonſtrative mark, that the pleaſantry he had ſeen her in, proceeded rather from deriſion than ſatisfaction, if, divine ſervice being ended, ſome ladies, as they came from church, had not called to viſit her.—The ſound of company coming up ſtairs, obliged him to break off in the middle of a rhapſody, which he, doubtleſs, thought very fine, and he took his leave ſomewhat haſtily, telling her, the paſſion with which he was inflamed, was too fierce to be reſtrained within thoſe bounds which ſhe might expect before witneſſes, and that he would wait on her the next day, when he hoped ſhe would be more at liberty to receive his vows.

Eaſed of the conſtraint which decency, and the reſpect which ſhe thought due to his quality, had laid her under while he was there, her natural ſprightlineſs burſt with double force. — Mr. Munden, who came in ſoon after, felt the effects of it: — he indeed enjoyed a benefit he little dreamt of. — The abſurd converſation of a rival he as yet knew nothing of, ſerved to make all he ſaid ſound more agree-

agreeable than ever in the ears of his miſtreſs, — in this exceſs of good humour, ſhe not only made a handſome apology for the treatment he had received at Mrs. Modely's, a thing ſhe had never before vouchſafed to do to any of her lovers, but alſo gave him an invitation to 'ſquire her to a country dancing, in which ſhe had engaged to make one the enſuing night.

CHAP. IV.

If it were not for ſome few particulars, might be as well paſſed over as read.

MISS Betſy, one would think, had now ſufficient matter to employ her meditations, on the ſcore of thoſe two lovers, who at preſent laid cloſe to ſiege to her, neither of whom ſhe was willing to part entirely with, and to retain either ſhe found required ſome management: —— Mr. Munden was beginning to grow impatient at the little progreſs his long courtſhip had made on her affections; and Sir Frederick Fineer, on the other hand, was for bringing things to a concluſion at once: —— ſhe was alſo every day receiving tranſient addreſſes from many others;

others; which, though not meant ſeriouſly by thoſe who made them, nor taken ſo by her, ſerved occaſionally to fill up any vacuum in her mind; — yet was it not in the power of love, — gallantry, or any other amuſement, to drive the memory of Mr. Trueworth wholly out of her head; which ſhews, that to a woman of ſenſe, a man of real merit, even though he is not loved, can never be totally indifferent.

But ſhe was at this time more than ordinarily agitated on that gentleman's account;—ſhe doubted not but her brother Frank, either had, or would ſhortly have a long conference with him, on the ſubject of his deſiſting his viſits to her, and could not keep herſelf from feeling ſome palpitations for the event; for though ſhe was not reſolved to afford any recompence to his love, ſhe earneſtly wiſhed he ſhould continue to deſire it, and that ſhe might ſtill preſerve her former dominion over a heart, which ſhe had always looked upon as the moſt valuable prize of all that her beauty had ever gained.

Thus unreaſonable, and indeed unjuſt was ſhe in the affairs of love: — in all others ſhe was humane, benevolent, and kind;

kind; but here covetous, even to a greediness, of receiving all, without any intention of making the least return. —In fine, the time was not yet come when she should be capable of being touched with that herself, which she took so much pains to inspire in others.

Though she could not love, she was pleased with being loved: — no man, of what degree or circumstance soever, could offend her by declaring himself her admirer; and as much as she despised Sir Frederick Fineer for his romantic manner of expressing the passion he professed for her, yet to have missed him out of the number of her train of captives, would have been little less mortification to her, than the loss of a favourite lover would have been to some other women.

That enamarato of all enamoratoes, would not, however, suffer the flames which he flattered himself with having kindled in her, to grow cool, and ambitious also of shewing his talents in verse as well as prose, sent to her that morning the following epistle:

'To the bright goddeſs of my ſoul,
'the adorable
'Miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'Moſt divine ſource of joy,

'TO ſhew in what manner I paſs 'the hours of abſence from you, and 'at the ſame time repreſent the caſe of a 'lover racked with ſuſpence, and toſſed 'alternately between hopes and fears, I 'take the liberty to inſcribe to you the 'incloſed poem, which, I moſt humbly 'beſeech you to take as it is meant, the 'tribute of my duteous zeal, — an humble 'offering preſented at the ſhrine of your 'all-glorious beauty, from

'Lovely ruler of my heart,

'Your eternally devoted,

'And no leſs faithful ſlave,

'F. FINEER.'

'A

A true picture of my heart in the different ſtages of its worſhip.

A

POEM,

Moſt humbly inſcribed to the never-enough deified

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

WHEN firſt from my unfiniſh'd ſleep I ſtart,
I feel a flutt'ring faintneſs round my heart;
A darkſome miſt, which riſes from my mind,
And like ſweet ſun-ſhine, leaves your name behind.

When from your ſhadow to yourſelf I fly,
To drink in tranſport at my thirſty eye,
Each orb ſurveys you with a kindling ſight,
And trembles to ſuſtain the vaſt delight:
From head to foot, o'er all your heav'n they ſtray,
Dazzled with luſtre in your milky way:
At laſt you ſpeak, and, as I ſtart to hear,
My ſoul is all collected in my ear.

But when reſiſtleſs tranſport makes me bold,
And your ſoft hand inclos'd in mine I hold,
Then flooding raptures ſwim through ev'ry vein,
And each ſwol'n art'ry, throbs with pleaſing pain.
Fain would I ſnatch you to my longing arms,
And graſp in extaſy your blazing charms:
O then,—how vain the wiſh that I purſue!
I would loſe all myſelf, and mix with you:
Involved, — embody'd, with your beauties join,
As fires meet fires, and mingle in their ſhine;
Abſorb'd in bliſs, I would diſſolving lie,
Become all you, and ſoul and body die.
Weigh well theſe ſymptoms, and then judge in part,
The poignant anguiſh of the bleeding heart
Of him, who is, with unutterable love,
reſplendent charmer
Your hoping, — fearing, languiſhing adorer,

F. FINEER.

P. S.

'P. S. I propoſe to fly to the feet of my 'adorable about five o'clock this after- 'noon; — do not, I beſeech you, clip 'the wings of my devotion, by forbid- 'ding my approach.'

How acceptable to a vain mind, is even the meaneſt teſtimony of admiration! --- If Miſs Betſy was not charmed with the elegance of this offering, ſhe was, at leaſt, very well pleaſed with the pains he took in compoſing it. --- In the humour ſhe then was, ſhe would, perhaps, have rewarded the labour of his brain, with giving him an opportunity of kiſſing her ſhoe a ſecond time, but ſhe expected her brother Frank about the hour he mentioned, with ſome intelligence of Mr. Trueworth, and had engaged to paſs the evening abroad, as has been already mentioned.

She ſent, however, a very complaiſant meſſage by the ſervant, who brought the letter; --- ſhe ordered he ſhould come up into her dining-room, and then, with a great deal of ſweetneſs, deſired him to tell his maſter, that ſhe was under a neceſſity of ſpending the whole day with ſome relations that were juſt come to town, therefore intreated he would defer the honour

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honour he intended her, 'till ſome other time.

Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs did indeed call upon her, as ſhe imagined he would;—he had been at the lodgings of Mr. Trueworth, but as that gentleman happened to be abroad at the time he went, and he was now obliged to go with his brother on ſome buſineſs relating to the commiſſion he was about to purchaſe, ſo could not ſtay long enough with her to enter into any converſation of moment.

Miſs Betſy had now full two hours upon her hands after her brother left her, to which ſhe had appointed Mr. Munden to come to conduct her to the country-dancing, and as ſhe had not ſeen Miſs Mabel for a good while, and had heard that lady had made her ſeveral viſits when ſhe was at home to receive them, ſhe thought to take this opportunity of having nothing elſe to do, to return part of the debt, which civility demanded from her to her friend. — Accordingly ſhe ſet out in a hackney-coach, but met with an accident by the way, which not only diſappointed her intentions, but likewiſe ſtruck a ſtrange damp on the gaiety of her ſpirits.

As they were driving pretty faſt thro' a narrow ſtreet, a gentleman's chariot run full againſt them, with ſuch rapidity, that both received a very great ſhock, inſomuch that the wheels were locked, and it was not without ſome difficulty, and the aſſiſtance of ſeveral people, who ſeeing what had happened, ran out of their ſhops and houſes, that the coachmen were able to keep their horſes from going on; which, had they done, both the machines muſt inevitably have been torn to pieces: — there were two gentlemen in the chariot, who immediately jumped out; — Miſs Betſy ſcreaming, and frighted almoſt to death, was alſo helped out of the coach by a very civil tradeſman, before whoſe door the accident had happened; — he led her into his ſhop, and made her ſit down, while his wife ran to fetch a glaſs of water, and ſome hartſhorn drops.

Her extreme terror had hindered her from diſcovering who was in the chariot, or whether any one was there, but the gentlemen having croſſed the way, and come into the ſame ſhop, ſhe preſently knew the one to be Sir Bazil Loveit, and the other Mr. Trueworth --- her ſurpriſe at ſight of the latter was ſuch as might have

had occaſioned ſome raillery, if it had not been concealed under that which ſhe had ſuſtained before; — Sir Bazil approached her with a very reſpectful bow, and made a handſome apology for the fault his man had committed, in not giving way when a lady was in the coach; to which ſhe modeſtly replied, that there could be no fault where there was no deſign of offending. — Mr. Trueworth then drawing near, with a very cold and reſerved air, told her, he hoped ſhe would receive no prejudice by the accident.

I believe the danger is now over, ſaid ſhe, ſtruck to the very heart at finding herſelf accoſted by him in a manner ſo widely different from that to which ſhe had been accuſtomed:— ſcarce had ſhe the fortitude to bear the ſhock it gave her; but ſummoning to her aid all that pride and diſdain could ſupply her with, to prevent him from perceiving how much ſhe was affected by his behaviour: — 'I could not, however,' purſued ſhe, 'with a tone of voice perfectly ironical, 'have expected to receive any conſolation 'under this little diſaſter from Mr. True-'worth, — I imagined ſir, that ſome 'weeks ago you had been repoſing your-'ſelf in the delightful bowers, and ſweet

'receſſes

'receſſes of your country ſeat. — How 'often have I heard you repeat with plea-'ſure theſe lines of Mr. Addiſon's?

"Bear me, ye gods! to Umbraia's gentle ſeats.

"Or hide me in ſweet Bayia's ſoft retreats.

'Yet ſtill I find you in this noiſy, buſt-'ling town.'—She concluded theſe words with a forced ſmile; which Mr. Trueworth taking no notice of replied, with the ſame gravity as before, 'I purpoſed 'indeed, madam, to have returned to Ox-'fordſhire, but events then unforeſeen 'have detained me.'

While they were ſpeaking, Sir Bazil recollecting the face of Miſs Betſy, which 'till now he had not done, cried, 'I think Ma-'dam, I have had the honour of ſeeing you 'before this.' — 'Yes, Sir Bazil,' replied ſhe, knowing very well he meant at Miſs Forward's, 'you ſaw me once in a 'place, where neither you, nor any one 'elſe, will ever ſee me again, but I did 'not then know the character of the per-'ſon I viſited:' To which Sir Bazil only replying, that he believed ſhe did not, Mr. Trueworth immediately rejoined, that the moſt cautious might be *once* de-ce ived.

The emphaſis with which he uttered the word once, made Miſs Betſy ſee, that he bore ſtill in his mind the ſecond error ſhe had been guilty of, in viſiting that woman; but ſhe had no time to give any other anſwer than a look of ſcorn and indignation, Sir Bazil's footman telling him the chariot was now at liberty, and had received no damage; on which the gentlemen took their leave of her, Mr. Trueworth ſhewing no more concern in doing ſo, than Sir Bazil himſelf, or any one would have done, who never had more than a mere curſory acquaintance with her.

She would not be perſwaded to go into the coach again, much leſs could ſhe think of going on her intended viſit, but deſired a chair to be called, and went directly home, in order to give vent to thoſe emotions, which may eaſier be conceived, than repreſented.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Seems to be calculated rather for the inſtruction than entertainment of the reader.

HOW great ſoever was the ſhock Miſs Betſy had ſuſtained in this interview with Mr. Trueworth, he did not think himſelf much indebted to fortune, for having thrown her in his way; — he had once loved her to a very high degree, and though the belief of her unworthineſs, — the fond endearments of one woman, — and the real merits of another, had all contributed to drive that paſſion from his breaſt, yet as a wound but lately cloſed is apt to bleed afreſh, on every little accident, ſo there required no leſs than the whole ſtock of the beautiful and diſcreet Miſs Harriot's perfections, to defend his heart from feeeling anew ſome part of its former pain, on this ſudden and unexpected attack.

Happy was it for him, that his judgment concurred with his preſent inclination, and that he had ſuch unqueſtionable reaſons for juſtifying the tranſition he had

made of his affections from one object to another, elſe might he have relapſed into a flame, which, if ever it had been attended with any true felicity, muſt have been purchaſed at the expence of an infinity of previous diſquiets.

He was now become extremely converſant with the family of Sir Bazil,— viſited there almoſt every day,—was well received by both the ſiſters, and had many opportunities of penetrating into the real ſentiments and diſpoſitions of Miſs Harriot, which he found to be ſuch as his moſt ſanguine wiſhes could have formed for the woman to be bleſt with, whom he would make choice of for a wife.—When he compared the ſteady temper, — the affability, — the eaſe, unaffected chearfulneſs, mixed with a becoming reſerve, which that young lady teſtified in all her words and actions, with the capricious turns, — the pride, — the giddy lightneſs he had obſerved in the behaviour of Miſs Betſy, his admiration of the one was increaſed by his diſapprobation of the other.

How great a pity was it, therefore, that a young lady, like Miſs Betſy, ſo formed by heaven and nature to have rendered any man compleatly happy in poſ-

ſeſſing

ſeſſing her, inferior to her fair competitor, neither in wit, beauty, nor any perſonal, or acquired endowment,— her inclinations no leſs pure, — her ſentiments as noble, —her diſpoſition equally generous and benign, ſhould, through her own inadvertency, deſtroy all the merit of ſo many amiable qualities, and for the ſake of indulging the wanton vanity of attracting univerſal admiration, forfeit, in reality, thoſe juſt pretentions to it which otherwiſe ſhe had been entitled from the deſerving and the diſcerning few!

Mr. Trueworth, as the reader may have obſerved, did not all at once withdraw his affections from the firſt object of them, nor tranſmit them to a ſecond, but on very juſtifiable motives. — The levity of Miſs Betſy, and other branches of ill conduct, had very much weaned her from his heart, before the wicked artifices of Miſs Flora had rendered her quite contemptible in his opinion, and had not wholly devoted himſelf to the beauties of Miſs Harriot, 'till he was well convinced the perfections of her mind were ſuch as could not fail of ſecuring the conqueſt which her eyes had gained.

He did not however preſently declare himſelf; — he ſaw the friendſhip between

the two ſiſters would be ſomewhat of an obſtacle to his hopes; — he had heard that Miſs Harriot had rejected ſeveral advantageous propoſals of marriage, merely becauſe ſhe would not be ſeparated from Mrs. Wellair; — he alſo found, that Sir Bazil, though for what reaſon he could not gueſs, ſeemed not very deſirous of having his ſiſter diſpoſed of: — the only probable way, therefore, he thought of obtaining his wiſhes, was to conceal them, 'till he found the means of inſinuating himſelf, ſo far into the good graces, both of the one and the other, as to prevent them from oppoſing whatever endeavours he ſhould make to engage their ſiſter to liſten to his ſuit.

The ſtratagem had all the effect for which it was put in practice: — the intimacy he had long contracted with Sir Bazil, now grew into ſo perfect a friendſhip, that he ſcarce ſuffered a day to paſs without an invitation to his houſe — Mrs. Wellair expreſſed the higheſt eſteem and liking of his converſation, and Miſs Harriot herſelf, not imagining of what conſequence every word that fell from her was to him, ſaid a thouſand obliging things on his account; particularly one day, after they had been ſinging a two-part ſong together, 'How often, cried

ſhe

ſhe to her ſiſter, 'ſhall we wiſh for this 'gentleman, when we get into the coun-'try, to act the principal part in our little 'operas!'

All this he returned in no other manner, than any man would have done, who had no farther aim than to ſhew his wit and gallantry: — ſo much of his happineſs, indeed, depended upon the event, that it behoved him to be very cautious how he proceeded; and it is likely he would not have ventured to throw off the maſk of indifference ſo ſoon as he did, if he had not been emboldened to it by an unexpected accident.

Among the number of thoſe, which viſited the ſiſters of Sir Bazil, there was a young lady called Mrs. Blanchfield;—ſhe was born in the ſame town with them, but had been ſome time in London, on account of the death of an uncle, who had left her a large fortune;—ſhe had a great deal of vivacity and good humour, which rendered both her perſon and converſation very agreeable;—ſhe paſſed in the eyes of moſt people for a beauty, but her charms were little taken notice of by Mr. Trueworth, though ſhe behaved towards him in a manner, which would have been flattering enough to a man of more vanity, or

who had been leſs engroſſed by the perfections of another.

By what odd means does fortune ſometimes bring about thoſe things ſhe is determined to accompliſh? — Who could have thought this lady, with whom Mr. Trueworth had no manner of concern and but a ſlight acquaintance, ſhould even, unknowing it herſelf, become the happy inſtrument of having that done for him, which he knew not very well how to contrive for himſelf; — yet ſo it proved, in effect, as the reader will preſently perceive.

Happening to call one morning on Sir Bazil while he was dreſſing, 'O! Trueworth,' ſaid he, 'I am glad you have 'prevented me; for I was juſt going to 'your lodgings: — I have ſomething to 'acquaint you with, which I fancy you 'will think deſerves your attention. — 'I ſuppoſe,' replied Mr. Trueworth, 'you would not tell me any thing, that 'was not really ſo; — but pray what is 'it?'

'What you have made a conqueſt here 'it ſeems,' reſumed Sir Bazil, 'and may 'ſay with Cæſar, Veni, Vidi, Vici.' — '— Prithee how did you ſleep laſt night? — Did

'—Did your guardian angel, or no kind 'tatling ſtar, give you notices of your ap- 'proaching happineſs, that you might re- 'ceive the bleſſing with moderation?'— Mr. Trueworth not able to conceive what it was he meaned, but imagining there was ſome myſtery contained in this raillery, deſired him to explain; 'for,' ſaid he, the 'happineſs you promiſe cannot 'come too ſoon.'

'You will think ſo, replied Sir Bazil, 'when I tell you, a fine lady, — a cele- 'brated toaſt, and a fortune of twenty 'thouſand pounds in her own hands, is 'fallen in love with you,' —'Wi h me?' cried Mr. Trueworth, 'you are merry this 'morning, Sir Bazil.' — 'No faith I am 'ſerious,' reſumed the other; 'the lady I 'ſpeak of is Mrs. Blanchfield: — I have 'heard her ſay abundance of handſome 'things of you myſelf,—ſuch as that you 'were a very fine gentleman, — that you 'had a great deal of wit, —ſung well; '— but my ſiſters tell me, that when ſhe 'is alone with them, ſhe aſks a thou- 'ſand queſtions about you, and in fine 'talks of nothing elſe;— ſo that, accord- 'ing to this account, a very little court- 'ſhip would ſerve to make you maſter 'both of her perſon and fortune.—What 'ſay you?'

'That I am neither vain enough to be-
'lieve,' anſwered Mr. Trueworth, 'nor
'ambitious enough to deſire ſuch a thing
'ſhould be real.' —— 'How!' — cried
Sir Bazil, in ſome ſurprize; — 'why ſhe
'is reckoned one of the fineſt women in
'town; — has wit, — good nature, — is
'of a good family, and an unblemiſhed
'reputation; ——— then her fortune, —
'though I know your eſtate ſets you
'above wanting a fortune with a wife,
'yet I muſt tell you a fortune is a very
'pretty thing, — children may come,
'and a younger brood muſt be provided
'for.'

'You argue very reaſonably indeed,'
replied Mr. Trueworth; 'but pray,' pur-
ſued he, 'as you are ſo ſenſible of this
'lady's perfections, how happened it,
'that you never made your addreſſes to
'her yourſelf?' — 'I was not ſure ſhe
'would like me ſo well as ſhe does you,'
ſaid he; 'beſides, to let you into the ſe-
'cret, my heart was engaged before I ever
'ſaw her face, and my perſon had been ſo
'too by this time, but for an unlucky rub
'in my way.'

'What! Sir Bazil, honourably in love,'
cried Mr. Trueworth, — 'Aye Charles,
'there

'there is no reſiſting deſtiny,' anſwered he; — 'I that have ranged through half 'the ſex in ſearch of pleaſure, — doated 'on the beauty of one,—the wit of ano- 'ther, — admired by turns their different 'charms, have at laſt found one in whom 'all I could wiſh in woman is compriz'd; 'and to whom I am unalterably fixed, be- 'yond even, I think, a poſſibility of 'change.'

'May I be truſted with the name of 'this admirable perſon,' ſaid Mr. True- worth, 'and what impedes your happi- 'neſs?'—You ſhall know all,' replied Sir Bazil; — 'in the firſt place, ſhe is 'called Miſs Mable.' — 'What! Miſs 'Mable of Bury-ſtreet,' cried Mr. True- worth, haſtily?'—'The ſame,' replied Sir Bazil: — 'you know her then?—I have 'ſeen her,' ſaid Mr. Trueworth, in com- 'pany with a lady I viſited ſome time ago, 'and believe ſhe is, in reality, the original 'of that amiable picture you have been 'drawing.'

'It rejoices me, however, that you 'approve my choice, ſaid Sir Bazil; but 'her father is, without exception the 'moſt ſordid, avaritious wretch breathing; '--- he takes more pleaſure in counting 'over his bags than in the happineſs of an

'only child; —— he ſeems glad of an 'alliance with me, — encourages my pre-'tenſions to his daughter, — is ready to 'give her to me to-morrow if I pleaſe; 'yet refuſes to part with a ſingle ſhil-'ling of her portion, 'till he can no 'longer keep it. ——— that is, he will 'ſecure to me ten thouſand pounds after 'his deceaſe; and adds, by way of ca-'jole, that, perhaps, he will then throw 'in a better penny; but is poſitively de-'termined to make no diminution of his 'ſubſtance, while he lives. —— Theſe,' continued he, 'are the only terms on 'which he will give his conſent, and this 'it is, which has ſo long delayed my mar-'riage.'

Mr. Trueworth could not here forbear making ſome reflections on the cruelty and injuſtice of thoſe parents, who rather than divide any part of their treaſures with their children, ſuffer them to let ſlip the only criſis that could make their happineſs.— After which, Sir Bazil went on in his diſcourſe.

'It is not,' ſaid he, 'that I would not 'gladly accept my charming girl on the 'conditions the old miſer offers, or even 'without any further hopes of what he 'promiſes to do for her; but I am ſo

'un-

'unhappily circumſtanced as to be under a neceſſity of having ready money with a wife;— old Sir Bazil, my father, gave 'my elder ſiſter ſix thouſand pounds on 'her marriage with Mr. Wellair, and, I 'ſuppoſe, to ſhew his affection to both his 'daughters were equal, bequeathed at his 'death the ſame ſum to Harriot, and this 'to be charged on the eſtate, notwith-'ſtanding it was then under ſome other 'incumbrances:—ſhe can make her de-'mand, either on coming of age, or on 'the day of marriage, which ever hap-'pens firſt; the one indeed is three years 'diſtant, ſhe being but eighteen, but who 'knows how ſoon the other may happen? '—'Tis true, ſhe ſeems at preſent quite 'averſe to changing her condition; but 'that is not to be depended upon,—all 'young women are apt to talk in that 'ſtrain; but when once the favourite man 'comes in view, away at once with reſo-'lution and virginity.'

Mr. Trueworth now ceaſed to wonder at the little ſatisfaction Sir Bazil had ſhewn, on any diſcourſe that caſually happened concerning love or marriage to Miſs Harriot; and nothing could be more lucky for him than this diſcovery of the cauſe,—he found by it that one obſtacle,

at

leaſt, to his hopes might eaſily be removed, and that it was in his own power to convert entirely to his intereſt, that which had ſeemed to threaten the greateſt oppoſition to it.

A moment's conſideration ſufficed to make him know what he ought to do, and that a more favourable conjuncture could not poſſibly arrive, for his declaring the paſſion he had ſo long concealed: — 'Methinks, Sir Bazil,' ſaid he, after a very ſhort pauſe, 'there is not the leaſt 'grounds for any apprehenſion of the in-'convenience you mention: --- whoever 'has in view the poſſeſſion of Miſs Har-'riot, muſt certainly be too much taken 'up with his approaching happineſs to 'think of any thing beſides.'

'Ah friend,' cried Sir Bazil, 'you 'talk like one ignorant of the world.'--- 'I talk like one who truly loves,' replied Mr. Trueworth, 'and is not ignorant of 'the merit of her he loves;--- and now,' continued he, perceiving Sir Bazil looked a little ſurpriſed, 'I will exchange ſecrets 'with you, and for the one you have re-'poſed in me, will entruſt you with an-'other, which has never yet eſcaped my 'lips: --I love your charming ſiſter;--- 'the firſt moment I beheld her made me

'her

'her adorer; — her affability, — her mo-
'deſt ſweetneſs, — her unaffected wit, —
'her prudence, —— the thouſand virtues
'of her mind have ſince confirmed the
'impreſſions that her beauty made, and I
'am now all her's.'

As Sir Bazil had never diſcovered any thing in Mr. Trueworth's behaviour, that could give him the leaſt cauſe to ſuſpect what now he was ſo fully informed of by his own confeſſion, he was very much aſtoniſhed, 'Is it poſſible!' cried he, 'are 'you in earneſt, and do you really love 'Harriot?' —— 'Yes, from my ſoul I do,' replied Mr. Trueworth, 'and wiſh no 'other bleſſing on this ſide heaven than to 'obtain her: — as to the ſix thouſand 'pounds you ſpeak of, I neither ſhould 'demand, nor would accept it, 'till well 'aſſured the payment of it was quite agree-'able to the ſituation of your affairs.'

'Would you then marry Harriot with 'nothing,' ſaid Sir Bazil, 'or what is 'tatamount to nothing, a ſmall fortune, 'and that to be paid diſcretionary, rather 'than Mrs. Blanchfield with twenty thou-'ſand pounds in ready ſpecie?' — 'Not 'only rather than Mrs. Blanchfield,' re-'plied Mr. Trueworth, 'but than any other

'other woman in the world, with all thoſe 'thouſands multiplied into millions.'

'Amazing love and generoſity!' cried Sir Bazil with ſome vehemence;—'could 'ſhe be capable of refuſing, ſhe were un-'worthy of you;—but this you may be aſ-'ſured, that if all the influence I have over 'can engage her to be yours, ſhe ſhall be 'ſo.'——Mr. Trueworth could teſtify the tranſport this promiſe gave him no otherwiſe than by a warm embrace, ſaying, at the ſame time, 'Dear, Sir Bazil!'—'Yes,' rejoined that gentleman, 'to 'give my ſiſter ſuch a huſband as Mr. 'Trueworth, I would put myſelf to a 'much greater inconvenience than the 'prompt payment of her fortune, and 'ſhall not abuſe your generous offer by—' 'I will not hear a word on that head,' cried Mr. Trueworth, haſtily interrupting him, 'and if you would add to the fa-'vours you have already conferred upon 'me, do not ever think of it:—purſue 'your inclinations with the deſerving ob-'ject of them, and be as happy with her 'as I hope to be through your friendly 'aſſiſtance with the adorable Miſs Har-'riot.'

Here

Here enſued a little conteſt between them;—Sir Bazil was aſhamed to accept that proof of friendſhip Mr. Trueworth made uſe of, joined to the conſideration of his own eaſe, at laſt prevailed; after which Sir Bazil told him, the ladies were gone to the ſhops, in order to make ſome purchaſes they wanted, but that he would take the firſt opportunity on their return, to acquaint his ſiſter with the ſentiments he had for her, and appointed to meet him at the chocolate-houſe in the evening, to let him know the ſucceſs.

CHAP. VI.

Shews the different operations of the ſame paſſion; in perſons of different principles and diſpoſitions.

SIR Bazil had very much at heart the accompliſhment of the promiſe he had made to Mr. Trueworth, and indeed no one thing could have ſeemed more ſtrange than that of his being otherwiſe, when ſo many reaſons concurred to engage his integrity:—he had a real friendſhip for the perſon

perſon who deſired his aſſiſtance, there were none among all his acquaintance for whom he had a greater regard, or who ſhared more of his good wiſhes;—the natural affection he had for his ſiſter made him rejoice in the opportunity of ſeeing her ſo happily diſpoſed of, and the particular intereſt of his own paſſion, might well render him not only ſincere, but alſo zealous in promoting an affair, which would ſo fully anſwer all theſe ends.

The firſt breaking the matter to Miſs Harriot he looked upon as the greateſt difficulty; for he doubted not but when once a belief of Mr. Trueworth's inclinations was properly inculcated in her, his amiable perſon, and fine qualities, would enable him to make his way, as a lover, into a heart, which had already a high eſteem for him as an acquaintance.

He reſolved, however, not to delay making the diſcovery, and his ſiſters coming home ſoon after, he ran out of his dreſſing-room, and met them as they were going up ſtairs into their own chamber, with a whole cargo of ſilks, and other things they had been buying:—'Hold, 'hold,' cried he, not ſuffering them to paſs, 'pray come in here, and let me ſee what

'what bargains you have been making?' '—' What underſtanding can you, that 'are a batchelor, have in theſe things?' ſaid Mrs. Wellair, laughing. — 'I have 'the more need then of being informed,' replied he, 'that I may be the better able 'to judge both of the fancy and frugality 'of my wife whenever I am ſo happy to 'get one.'

'Well, well, I know all you men 'muſt be humoured,' ſaid Mrs. Wellair, in the ſame gay ſtrain: — 'come, ſiſter, 'let us unpack our bundles.'—With theſe words they both went in, and the ſervant who followed them with the things, having laid them down on a table, withdrew.

The ladies then began to open their parcels, and Sir Bazil gave his opinion firſt of one thing, and then of another, as they were ſhewn to him, 'till Miſs Harriot diſplaying a roll of very rich white damaſk, 'to which of you does this belong?' ſaid Sir Bazil. — 'To me,' anſwered ſhe. — 'Hah!—I am glad on it, upon my ſoul,' rejoined he: — 'this is an omen of mar-'riage, my dear ſiſter: — I will lay my 'life upon it, that you become a bride in 'this gown.'—'I muſt firſt find the man 'to make me ſo,' cried ſhe briſkly. — 'He

• He is not very far to ſeek, I dare anſwer,' ſaid Sir Bazil.—'Why then,' replied ſhe, 'when he is found he muſt wait 'till my 'mind comes to me, and that, I be-'lieve, will not be in the wearing of this 'gown.'

'I am of a different way of thinking,' ſaid he, ſomewhat more gravely than before;—'what would you ſay if I ſhould 'tell you, that one of the fineſt, moſt ac-'compliſhed men in Europe is fallen deſ-'perately in love with you, and has en-'gaged me to be his interceſſor?'—'I 'ſhould ſay nothing,' anſwered ſhe, 'but 'that you have a mind to divert yourſelf, 'and put me out of humour with my 'new gown, by your converting it into a 'hieroglyphic.'—In ſpeaking theſe words ſhe catched up her ſilk, and ran haſtily up ſtairs, leaving Mrs. Wellair and her brother together.

'Poor Harriot,' ſaid Sir Bazil, after ſhe was gone, 'I have put her to the 'bluſh with the very name of matri-'mony;—but I aſſure you, ſiſter,' continued he to Mrs. Wellair, 'the thing I 'have mentioned is ſerious,'—'Indeed! cried that lady in ſome ſurpriſe.—'Yes, 'upon my honour,' reſumed he, 'the 'gentleman I mean had not left me above a quarter

'a quarter of an hour before you came 'in, and I can tell you is one whom you 'know.'---'If I know him,' replied ſhe, after a pauſe, 'I fancy I need not be at 'any loſs to gueſs his name, by the de-'ſcription you have given me of him; 'for I have ſeen no man ſince my coming 'to town, who ſo well deſerves thoſe en-'comiums as Mr. Trueworth.'---'I am 'glad you think ſo,' ſaid Sir Bazil; 'for 'I am certain your judgment will go a 'a great way with Harriot;--- he is, in 'fact, the perſon I have been ſpeaking of, 'and is ſo every way deſerving of my ſiſ-'ter's affection, that ſhe muſt not only be 'the moſt inſenſible creature in the world, 'but alſo the greateſt enemy to her own 'intereſt and happineſs, to refuſe him.'

He then repeated to her all the converſation he had that morning with Mr. Trueworth, the anſwers that gentleman had given him to the propoſition he had made on Mrs. Blanchfield's account;--- his declaration of his paſſion for Miſs Harriot, and every other particular, excepting that of the non-payment of her fortune; and that he concealed only becauſe he would not be ſuſpected to have been bribed by it, to ſay more of his friend than he really merited.

Mrs.

Mrs. Wellair was equally charmed and aſtoniſhed at this report, and on Sir Bazil's telling her, that Mr. Trueworth was under ſome apprehenſions, that the pleaſure ſhe took in having her ſiſter with her, would be an impediment to his deſires, ſhe very gravely replied, that ſhe was very ſorry Mr. Trueworth ſhould imagine, ſhe was ſo wanting in underſtanding, or true affection to her ſiſter, as for the ſelf-ſatisfaction of her company, to offer any thing in oppoſition to her intereſt or happineſs.

After this they had a good deal of diſcourſe together, concerning Mr. Trueworth's family and fortune, the particulars of both which Sir Bazil was very well acquainted with, and Mrs. Wellair being thoroughly convinced by what he ſaid of the many advantages of the alliance propoſed, aſſured him, in the ſtrongeſt terms ſhe was able, that he would do every thing in her power to promote it.

'I'll entertain her on this ſubject while 'we are dreſſing,' ſaid ſhe:---'your plea-'ſantry on this white damaſk will furniſh 'me with an excellent pretence;---I ſhall 'begin in the ſame ſtrain you did, and 'then proceed to a ſerious narrative of all 'you have been telling me, relating to Mr.

'Mr. Trueworth; to which I ſhall add 'my own ſentiments of the amiableneſs of 'his perſon, parts, and accompliſhments, 'and ſet before her eyes, in the light it 'deſerves, the generoſity of his paſſion, in 'refuſing ſo great a fortune as Mrs. 'Blanchfield for her ſake, and the reſpect-'fulneſs of it, in not daring to declaring 'himſelf, 'till he had engaged the only 'two, who may be ſuppoſed to have 'any influence over her, in favour of his 'ſuit.'

'I know,' ſaid Sir Bazil, 'that you 'women are the fitteſt to deal with one 'another; — therefore, as I ſee you are 'hearty in the cauſe, ſhall wholly depend 'on your management; — but hearkye, 'ſiſter,' continued he, perceiving ſhe was going out of the room, 'I have one 'thing to add,---I am to meet Trueworth 'at the chocolate-houſe this evening; --- 'he will be impatient for the ſucceſs of 'the promiſe I have made him;---now 'you know we ſhall have a great deal of 'company at dinner to-day, and I may 'not have an opportunity of ſpeaking to 'you in private before the time of my 'going to him; --- for that reaſon we 'muſt have ſome watch-word between us, 'that may give an intimation in general,

'how

'how Harriot receives what you have ſaid 'to her.'

'Oh, that is eaſy,' cried Mrs. Wellair, 'as thus,--- you ſhall take an occaſion, 'either at table, or any time when you 'find it moſt proper, to aſk me, how I 'do? and by my anſwer to that queſtion, 'you will be able to judge what ſucceſs I 'have had.'--- 'Very right,' replied Sir Bazil, 'and I will be ſure to obſerve.'--- There paſſed no more between them, ſhe went directly up ſtairs to do as ſhe had ſaid, and Sir Bazil to pay his morning viſit to Miſs Mable, as he uſually did every day.

The humours of theſe two worthy perſons, were extremely well adapted to make each other happy :---Sir Bazil was gay, but he was perfectly ſincere;--- Miſs Mable had a great deal of ſoftneſs in her nature, but it was entirely under the direction of her prudence;---ſhe returned the paſſion of her lover with equal tenderneſs, yet would not permit the gratification of it, 'till every thing that threatened an interruption of their mutual eaſe ſhould be removed. ---- Sir Bazil made no ſecret of his affairs to her;--- ſhe knew very well, that he deſired no more at preſent of her father than the

ſix

ſix thouſand pounds, charged on his eſtate for Miſs Harriot's fortune, and as the old gentleman teſtified the higheſt eſteem for him, and ſatisfaction in the propoſed match, ſhe flattered herſelf, that he would at laſt conſent to ſo reaſonable a requeſt, but, 'till he did ſo, remained firm in her reſolution of denying both her own, and her lover's wiſhes.

The pleaſure with which they always ſaw each other, was now however greatly enhanced by his acquainting her with the almoſt aſſured hope he had, that the difficulty, which had ſo long kept them aſunder, would be ſoon got over, and he ſhould have the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of complying with the conditions her father had propoſed, without the leaſt danger of incurring any inconvenience to himſelf.

The clock ſtriking two, he was obliged to leave her, and go home to receive the company he expected: —— he behaved among his friends with his accuſtomed vivacity; but caſting his eyes frequently towards Miſs Harriot, he imagined he ſaw a certain gloom upon her countenance, which made him fearful for the effects of Mrs. Wellair's ſolicitations, 'till recollecting the agreement between him

and that lady, he cried out haſtily to her, 'How do you do, ſiſter?' To which ſhe anſwered, with a ſmile, 'As well as can 'be expected, brother;' — and then to prevent Miſs Harriot, or any one elſe from wondering what ſhe meant by ſo odd a reply, added, 'after the ugly jolt I 'have had this morning over London 'ſtones in a hackney coach.'

Sir Bazil eaſily underſtood, that by the words, 'As well as can be expected,' his ſiſter meaned as much as could be hoped for, from the firſt attack on a maid ſo young and innocent, as Miſs Harriot, and doubted not but that ſo favourable a beginning would have as fortunate a concluſion.

Thoſe gueſts who had dined with him, ſtayed ſupper alſo, but that did not hinder him from fulfilling his engagement with Mr. Trueworth; — he begged they would excuſe a ſhort excurſion, which he ſaid he was obliged to make, on extraordinary buſineſs, and accordingly went at the time appointed for the meeting that gentleman.

Mr. Trueworth received the intelligence he brought him with tranſports befitting the ſincerity of his paſſion: — he thought

thought he had little to apprehend, ſince Mrs. Wellair vouchſafed to become his advocate.—'It is certainly, ſaid Sir Bazil, 'as greatly in her power to forward the 'completion of your wiſhes, as it was to 'have obſtructed them; — but, my dear 'friend, continued he, there is no time to 'be loſt: — the buſineſs that brought 'my ſiſters to town will ſoon be over, and 'Mrs. Wellair will then be on the wing to 'get home to her huſband and family;— 'you muſt dine with me to-morrow;—I 'ſhall be able by that time to learn the 'particulars of Harriot's behaviour, on 'her firſt hearing an account of the affec- 'tion with which you honour her, and by 'that you may the better judge how to 'proceed.'——— This was the ſubſtance 'of all the diſcourſe they had together 'at that time; — Sir Bazil went home, 'and Mr. Trueworth adjourned to a 'coffee-houſe, where he met with ſome- 'thing not very pleaſing to him. — It was a letter from Miſs Flora, containing theſe lines:

To Charles Trueworth, Eſq;

'My Dear Trueworth,

'FOR ſuch you ſtill are, and ever muſt 'be, to my fond doating heart, though 'I have too much cauſe to fear you ceaſe

'to wiſh it;—elſe why this cruel abſence?
'—I have not ſeen you theſe three days!
'— an age to one that loves like me.—
'I am racked to death with the appre-
'henſions of the motives of ſo unexpected
'a neglect;— if my perſon or paſſion
'were unworthy your regard, why did
'you accept them with ſuch enchanting
'ſoftneſs?— and if ever I had any place
'in your affection, what have I done to
'forfeit it?— But ſure you cannot think
'of abandoning me!—of leaving me to
'all the horrors of deſpair and ſhame!—
'No,—'tis impoſſible,—ingratitude con-
'ſiſts not with that ſtrict honour you pre-
'tend to, and that I ſtill flatter myſelf
'you are in reality poſſeſſed of:— you
'may have had ſome buſineſs,—but how
'poor a thing is buſineſs when compared
'with love!— And I may reply with our
'Engliſh Sappho, in one of her amorous
'epiſtles,

"Buſineſs you feign, but did you love like me,
"I ſhould your moſt important buſineſs be."

'But whither does my hurrying ſpirits
'tranſport me?— If I am ſtill ſo happy
'to retain any ſhare of your heart, I
'have ſaid too much; if I am not, all I
'can

'can ſay will be ineffectual to move you.
'— I ſhall, therefore, only tell you, that
'I can live no longer without ſeeing you,
'and will call on you at the coffee-houſe
'this evening about eight, 'till when I
'am,

'Though in the utmoſt diſtraction,

'My dear, dear Trueworth,

'Your paſſionately tender,

'And devoted ſervant,

'F. MELLASIN.'

'P.S. Having heard you ſay letters were
'left for you at this place, and that you
'ſtepped in once or twice every day, I
'though it more proper to direct for
'you here, than at your own lodgings.
'—Once more adieu.—Do not fail to
'meet me at the hour.'

Scarce could the ghoſt of a forſaken miſtreſs, drawing his curtains at the dead of night, have ſhocked Mr. Trueworth more than this epiſtle:—he had indeed done no more than any man, of his age and conſtitution, would have done, if tempted in the manner he had been, yet he reproached himſelf ſeverely for it:—he knew how little this unhappy creature had her paſſions in ſubjection, and though all the liking he ever had for her was

now ſwallowed up in his honourable affections for Miſs Harriot, yet he was too humane and too generous not to pity the extravagance of a flame he was no longer capable of returning; ---- he wanted her to know there was a neceſſity for their parting, but knew not how to do it without driving her to extremes! -- he hated all kind of diſſimulation, and as neither his honour, nor his inclinations, would permit him to continue an amorous correſpondence with her, he was very much at a loſs how to put an end to it, without letting her into the real cauſe, which as yet he thought highly improper to do.

It coſt him ſome time in debating within himſelf how he ſhould behave, in an affair which was indeed, in the preſent ſituation of his heart, pretty perplexing; —he conſidered Miſs Flora as a woman of condition,—as one who tenderly loved him, and as one, who, on both theſe accounts, it would not become him to affront: — he reflected alſo, that a woman, who had broke through all the rules of virtue, modeſty, and even common decency, for the gratification of her wild deſires, might, when denied that gratification, be capable of taking ſuch ſteps as might not only expoſe her own character, but with it ſo much of his, as might

might ruin him with Miſs Harriot; — he found it therefore highly neceſſary to diſguiſe his ſentiments, and act towards her in ſuch a manner as ſhould wean her affections from him by degrees, without his ſeeming to intend, or wiſh for ſuch an event.

He had but juſt come to this determination, when he was told from the bar, that a lady in a hackney coach deſired to ſpeak with him: — he went directly to her, but inſtead of ordering the man to drive to any particular houſe, bid him drive as ſlowly as he could round St. James's ſquare.

This very much ſtartling her, ſhe aſked him what he meaned! — 'Are all the 'houſes of entertainment in the town, 'ſaid ſhe, ſhut up, that we muſt talk to 'one another in the ſtreet?' — 'It is im-'poſſible for me, madam, anſwered he, 'to have the pleaſure of your company 'this evening, — I am engaged with 'ſome gentlemen at the houſe where you 'found me, and have given my promiſe 'to return in ten minutes.'—Theſe words, and the reſerved tone in which he ſpoke them, ſtabbed her to the heart. — 'Un-'generous man! cried ſhe, is it thus 'you repay the moſt tender and ardent

'paſſion that ever was" — 'You ladies, 'ſaid he, when once you give way to the 'ſoft impulſe, are apt to devote your-'ſelves too much to it, but men have a 'thouſand other amuſements, which all 'claim a ſhare in the variegated ſcenes of 'life; —I am ſorry, therefore, to find you 'diſquieted in the manner your letter in-'timates — Love ſhould be nurſed by 'laughing, eaſe, and joy; ſour diſcontent, 'reproaches, and complaints, deform its 'native beauty, and render that a curſe, 'which otherwiſe would be the greateſt 'of our bleſſings—I beg, you, therefore' continued he, with ſomewhat more ſoftneſs in his voice, 'for your own ſake, to mode-'rate this vehemence; — be aſſured I will 'ſee you as often as poſſible, and ſhall 'always think of you with the regard I 'ought to do.'

Perceiving ſhe was in very great agonies, he threw his arms about her waiſt, and gave her a very affectionate ſalute, which, though no more than what a brother might have offered to a ſiſter, a little mitigated the force of her grief: —'I ſee I am undone, cried ſhe; — I 'have loſt your heart, and am the moſt 'wretched creature upon earth!' — 'Do 'not ſay ſo, replied he; — I never can 'be ungrateful for the favours you have

'beſtowed

'beſtowed upon me; but diſcretion ought 'to be obſerved in an amour ſuch as our's. '—I have really ſome affairs upon my 'hands, which for a time will very much 'engroſs me, — make yourſelf eaſy then, 'reſume that gaiety, which renders you ſo 'agreeable to the world, and depend upon 'it, that to make me happy, you muſt be 'ſo yourſelf.' — 'When then ſhall I ſee 'you,' cried ſhe, ſtill weeping and hang-'ing on his breaſt?'—'As ſoon as conve-'nience permits I will ſend to you, ſaid 'he; but there is a neceſſity for my leaving 'you at preſent.'

He then called to the coachman to drive back to the houſe where he had taken him up. — It is not to be doubted but ſhe made uſe of all the rhetoric of deſperate dying love, and every other art ſhe was miſtreſs of, to engage him to prefix ſome time for their meeting; but he would not ſuffer himſelf to be prevailed upon ſo far, and he left her with no other conſolation than a ſecond embrace, little warmer than the former had been, and a repetition of the promiſe he had made of writing to her in a ſhort time.

CHAP. VII.

May be called an appendix to the former, as it contains only ſome paſſages ſubſequent to the preceding occurrences.

WHAT pain ſoever the good-nature and generoſity of Mr. Trueworth had made him ſuffer, at the ſight of the unfortunate Miſs Flora's diſtreſs, it was diſſipated by recalling to his mind the pleaſing idea Sir Bazil had inſpired in him, of ſucceeding in his wiſhes with the amiable Miſs Harriot.

What ſleep he had that night, doubtleſs, preſented him with nothing but the delightful images of approaching joys, and, poſſibly, might give him ſome intimation of what was in thoſe moments doing for him, by thoſe who were waking for his intereſt.

Mrs. Wellair, who was extremely cautious how ſhe undertook any thing, without being fully convinced it was right, and no leſs induſtrious in accompliſhing what-

whatever ſhe had once undertook, had employed all the time ſhe had, with her ſiſter before dinner, in repreſenting to her, in the moſt pathetic terms, the paſſion Mr. Trueworth had for her,— the extraordinary merits he was poſſeſſed of, and the many advantages of an alliance with him; but Miſs Harriot was modeſt to that exceſs, that to be told, though from the mouth of a ſiſter, ſhe had inſpired any inclinations of the ſort ſhe mentioned, gave her the utmoſt confuſion;— ſhe had not conſidered the difference of ſexes, and could not hear that any thing in her had reminded others of it, without bluſhing: —the effects of her beauty gave her rather a painful than a pleaſing ſenſation, and ſhe was ready to die with ſhame at what the moſt part of women are ſtudious to acquire, and look on as their greateſt glory.

She offered nothing, however, in oppoſition to what Mrs. Wellair had ſaid, concerning the perſon, or amiable qualities of Mr. Trueworth; neither indeed had ſhe a will to do it;—— ſhe had been always highly pleaſed with his converſation, and had treated him with the ſame innocent freedom ſhe did her brother, and ſhe was now afraid, that it was her behaving to him in this manner, that had

encouraged him to think of making his addreſſes to her as a lover; — ſhe looked back with regret on every little mark of favour ſhe had ſhewn him, leſt he ſhould have conſtrued them into a meaning, which was far diſtant from her thoughts; and theſe reflections it was, that occaſioned that unſual penſiveneſs, which Sir Bazil had obſerved in her at dinner, and which had given him ſome apprehenſions proceeded from a cauſe leſs favourable to his friend.

Mrs. Wellair was not at all diſcouraged by the manner in which her ſiſter had liſtened to this overture;—ſhe knew that ſeveral propoſals of the ſame nature had been made to her in the country, all which ſhe had rejected, and rejected with a diſdain:—a certain air of abhorrence widely different to what ſhe teſtified on account of Mr. Trueworth; and this prudent lady rightly judged, that he had little elſe to combat with, than the over-baſhfulneſs of his miſtreſs,

At night, on going to bed, ſhe renewed the diſcourſe, and purſued the theme ſhe had begun, with ſuch ſucceſs, that ſhe brought Miſs Harriot to confeſs, ſhe believed there was no man more deſerving to be loved than Mr. Trueworth;———

'but

'but my dear ſiſter,' ſaid ſhe, 'I have 'no inclination to marry, nor to leave 'you; I am quite happy as I am, and 'deſire to be no more ſo:' to which the other replied, that was childiſh talking, — that ſhe would, doubtleſs, marry ſome time or other, — that ſhe might, perhaps, never have ſo good an offer, and could not poſſibly have a better, therefore adviſed her not to ſlip the preſent opportunity, but whenever Mr. Trueworth ſhould make a declaration of his paſſion to herſelf; to receive it in ſuch a manner, as ſhould not give him any room to imagine ſhe was utterly averſe to his pretenſions.

Miſs Harriot ſuffered her to urge her on this point for a conſiderable time, but at laſt replied in a low and heſitating voice, that ſhe would be guided by her friends, who ſhe was perfectly convinced had her intereſt at heart, and knew much better than herſelf what conduct ſhe ought to obſerve: to which Mrs. Wellair replied, that ſhe doubted not but the end would abundantly juſtify the advice that had been given her.

The firſt thing this lady did in the morning, was to go to her brother's chamber, and acquaint him with all that had

had paſſed between herſelf and Miſs Harriot; after which they agreed together, that Mr. Trueworth ſhould have an opportunity that very day of making his addreſſes to her.

Though Sir Bazil thought it needleſs to add any thing to what was already done, yet he could not forbear taking an occaſion, when they were at breakfaſt, to mention Mr. Trueworth's name, and the many good qualities he was poſſeſſed of.—Mrs. Wellair joined in the praiſes her brother gave him, but Miſs Harriot ſpoke not a word: — on which, 'Are you not of our 'opinion, ſiſter?' cried he to her.—'Yes, 'brother, anſwered ſhe, 'Mr. True-'worth is certainly a very fine gentleman,' '— 'How cold is ſuch an expreſſion,' reſumed Sir Bazil, 'and even that ex-'torted?' — 'You would not, ſure, ſir,' ſaid ſhe, a little gaily, 'have me in rap-'tures about him, and ſpeak as if I were 'in love with him?'

'Indeed but I would, cried Sir Bazil; 'and, what is more, would alſo have 'you be ſo; — he deſerves it from you, 'and as you muſt ſome time or other 'be ſenſible of the tender paſſion, you 'cannot do it at more ſuitable years — 'I

'I ſee no neceſſity,' replied ſhe, 'for my 'being ſo at any years.'

'It is a ſign then, ſaid he, that you 'have not conſulted nature; — have you 'never read what Lord Lanſdown has 'wrote upon this ſubject? — if you have 'not, I will repeat it to you:

"In vain from fate we ſtrive to fly,
"For firſt or laſt, as all muſt die,
"So 'tis decreed by thoſe above,
"That firſt or laſt, we all muſt love.'

'Poets are not always prophets,' anſwered ſhe, laughing.—'It depends upon 'Mr. Trueworth himſelf,' ſaid Sir Bazil, 'to prevent you from giving the lie to the 'prediction; — if he fails, I ſhall believe 'no other man in the world will ever 'have the power to engage you to fulfil 'it; — he dines here to-day; — Siſter 'Wellair and I are obliged to go abroad 'in the afternoon, ſo muſt deſire you to 'make tea, and entertain him as well as 'you can, 'till we come back.'

'I ſee you are both in the plot againſt 'me,' cried ſhe; 'but I ſhall endeavour 'to behave ſo as not to affront your 'gueſt, yet at the ſame time be far from 'making good your oracle.'

A gentleman coming in to Sir Bazil, broke off their diſcourſe, and relieved Miſs Harriot from any farther perſecution at this time.—It was not that ſhe diſliked either the perſon or converſation of Mr. Trueworth, or that ſhe was tired with the praiſes given him by her brother and ſiſter; —— on the contrary, ſhe found a thouſand things which they had not mentioned, to admire in him: — in fine, he was, in reality, leſs indifferent to her than ſhe herſelf imagined; but there was a certain ſhyneſs in her diſpoſition, which mingled ſome ſhare of pain with the pleaſure of hearing him ſpoke of as her lover.

She was ſenſible this propenſity, which nature had implanted, was a weakneſs in her; but though ſhe uſed her utmoſt efforts for overcoming it, ſhe found herſelf unequal to the taſk: — in vain ſhe conſidered, that the addreſſes of a man of ſuch perfect honour and politeneſs, as Mr. Trueworth, could not but be accompanied with the moſt profound reſpect: — in vain ſhe called to mind the example of other ladies, whom ſhe had ſeen behave in the company of thoſe, who profeſſed themſelves their lovers, with the greateſt eaſe and ſprightlineſs, the very

ſight

ſight of Mr. Trueworth, as ſhe ſaw him from her chamber window talking with her brother in the garden, threw her heart into palpitations, which all the reaſon ſhe was miſtreſs of, could not enable her to quiet; but when obliged to go down and ſit with him at table, her confuſion increaſed, by being more near the object which occaſioned it: — ſhe endeavoured to treat him with the ſame freedom ſhe had been accuſtomed, but it was not in her power: — in fine, never woman ſuffered more in conſtraining herſelf to be ſilent and demure, than ſhe did in conſtraining herſelf to be talkative and gay.

What then became of her, when Sir Bazil and Mrs. Wellair, after making a formal excuſe for a ſhort abſence, went out, and left her expoſed to the ſollicitations of a paſſion, which her timid modeſty had made her ſo much dread?

The moment Mr. Trueworth ſaw himſelf alone with her, he approached her with the moſt tender and reſpectful air, — 'How often, madam, have I languiſh-'ed for an opportunity ſuch as this, of 'telling you how much my ſole adores 'you! — My dear friend, Sir Bazil, has 'aſſured me he has prepared you to for-

'give

'give the boldneſs of my flame, and that 'for his ſake you will vouchſafe to liſten 'to my vows; but it is from myſelf alone 'you can be convinced of the ardency of 'the love you have inſpired.'

'My brother, ſir,' anſwered ſhe, bluſh-'ing, 'has indeed informed me, that I have 'obligations to you of a nature, which I 'was as far from expecting, as I am far 'from deſerving.' — Here Mr. Trueworth began to run into ſome praiſes on the charms which had ſubdued his heart, which, though no more than dictated by his real ſentiments, ſeemed to her too extravagant, and beyond what her modeſty would ſuffer her to endure: — 'Hold, 'ſir,' cried ſhe, interrupting him, if you 'would have me believe your profeſſions 'are ſincere, forbear, I beſeech you to 'talk to me in this manner: —— it is 'an ill-judged policy, methinks, in 'you men, to idolize the women too 'much, you wiſh would think well of 'you; — if our ſex are in reality ſo vain 'as you generally repreſent us, on whom 'but yourſelves can the fault be laid? —— 'And if we prove ſo weak as to imagine 'ourſelves ſuch, as either the flattery, or 'the partial affection of the lover paints 'us, we ſhall be apt to take every thing 'as our due, and think little gratitude

'is

'is owing for the offering he makes us 'of his heart.'

Mr. Trueworth was perfectly ravished at hearing her speak thus, but durst not express himself with too much warmth on the occasion: — 'It must be confessed, 'madam,' replied he, 'that the beauties 'of the person, when not accompanied 'by those of the mind, afford but a short-'lived triumph to the fair possessor; — 'they dazzle at first sight, and take the 'senses as it were by surprise; but the 'impression soon wears off, and the cap-'tivated heart gains its former liberty, '— nay, perhaps, wonders at itself for 'having been enslaved: — whereas those 'darts, which fly from the perfections of 'the mind, penetrate into the soul, and 'fix a lasting empire there; — but when 'both these charms shall happen to be 'united, as in the lovely Harriot," con-'tinued he, taking one of her hands and 'kissing it; — 'when in the most en-'chanting form that nature ever made, 'is found a soul enriched with every 'virtue, — every grace, — how indis-'soluble is the chain! — how glorious the 'bondage!'

'Love is a theme I have never made 'my study,' answered she; 'but accord-

'ing

'ing to my notions of the matter, thoſe 'gentlemen, who pretend to be affected 'by it, give themſelves more trouble than 'they need: — as that paſſion is generally 'allowed rather to be the child of fancy, 'than of real merit in the object loved, 'I ſhould think it would be ſufficient for 'any man in his addreſſes to a lady, to tell 'her, that ſhe happens to hit his taſte, '— that ſhe is what he likes, without 'dreſſing her up in qualities, which, per-'haps, have no exiſtence but in his own 'imagination.'

'Where love is founded on beauty 'alone, as I have already ſaid,' reſumed 'Mr. Trueworth, 'the inſtructions you 'give, madam, of the manner of declar-'ing it, are certainly very juſt; for, in-'deed, no farther could be warranted by 'ſincerity: — but where reaſon directs 'the lover's choice, and points out thoſe 'excellencies which alone can make him 'happy in the poſſeſſion of his wiſhes, 'ideas more ſublime will naturally ariſe, 'and we can never too much admire, 'or praiſe, what is immediately from the 'Divine Source of all Perfection! — It is 'not, O charming Harriot!' purſued he, looking on her with the utmoſt tender-neſs; —'it is not thoſe radiant eyes, — 'that lovely mouth, nor that ſweet ma-

'jeſty

'jeſty that ſhines through all your air,
'but it is the heaven within that I adore;
'— to that I pay my preſent worſhip,
'and on that build all my hopes of future
'bliſs!'

Miſs Harriot was about to make ſome reply, but his looks, the vehemence with which he uttered theſe laſt words, and the paſſionate geſture which accompanied them, made her relapſe into her former baſhfulneſs, from which ſhe had a little recovered herſelf, and again deprived her of the power of ſpeech.

'You give up the point then, my angel,
'cried he, perceiving ſhe was ſilent, and I
'am glad you do; for had you conti-
'nued to prohibit my expatiating on
'theſe matters, which made me your
'adorer, I muſt have maintained the ar-
'gument even againſt your lovely ſelf,
'to whom I ſhall for ever yield in all
'things elſe.'

After this he fell, inſenſibly as it were, into ſome diſcourſe concerning the divine ordinance of marriage, and then proceeded to give her the moſt amiable picture that words could form of that ſtate, when two perſons of virtue, honour, and good ſenſe, were by love and law united, and found

found themſelves equally bound by duty and inclination, to promote each other's happineſs.

There are ſome ladies who liſten very contentedly to the moſt warm and amorous addreſſes that can be made to them, yet will not ſuffer the leaſt word of marriage till after a long and tedious preparation is made for a ſound, which they pretend to think ſo dreadful. — Theſe no doubt will ſay, that Mr. Trueworth went too far for a lover, on the firſt declaration of his paſſion; but he was emboldened to act in the manner he did, by the brother of his miſtreſs, and had the ſatisfaction to perceive ſhe was not offended at it; — ſhe had a great ſhare of ſolid underſtanding, — was an enemy to all ſorts of affectation, and as ſhe knew the end propoſed by his courtſhip was marriage, ſaw no reaſon why he ſhould be fearful of mentioning it to her; and though her modeſty would not permit her to take much part in a converſation of this nature, yet ſhe was too artleſs, and indeed too ſincere, to counterfeit a diſpleaſure which ſhe did not feel.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Is more full of buſineſs than entertainment.

WHILE Mr. Trueworth was thus proſecuting a ſuit, which every time he ſaw the lovely Harriot redoubled his impatience to accompliſh, Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs had been twice at his lodgings without finding him at home; but on that gentleman's leaving his name the ſecond time, and ſaying he would come again the next morning, the other thought himſelf under an indiſpenſible neceſſity of ſtaying to receive his viſit.

The meeting of theſe two was extremely civil and polite, but far from that cordial familiarity which uſed to paſs between them, eſpecially on the ſide of Mr. Francis. — After Mr. Trueworth had congratulated him on the recovery of his health, and coming to town, they fell into ſome diſcourſe on ordinary affairs, without the leaſt mention of Miſs Betſy, by either party, for a conſiderable time, 'till her brother growing a little impatient, that the other ſhould ſay nothing to him on

an

an affair, in which he had made him his confidant, and which he had taken ſo much pains to forward, ſaid to him, with an air partly gay, and partly ſerious, — 'I was ſurpriſed on my arrival to be 'told, that a paſſion ſo violent, as that 'you pretended for my ſiſter, ſhould all 'on a ſudden vaniſh, and that a thing, 'which I once thought ſo near being con-'cluded, was entirely broken off.'

'Things of that nature,' replied Mr. Trueworth, coldly, 'are never concluded 'till accompliſhed: — accidents ſome-'times intervene to ſeparate perſons, who 'have ſeemed moſt likely to be united 'for ever, which, indeed, never was the 'caſe between me and that lady.'

'Yet, ſir,' rejoined the other, a little irritated at his manner of ſpeaking, 'I 'think, that when a gentleman has made 'his addreſſes to a young lady of family 'and character for any length of time, 'and in the public manner you did, ſome 'cauſe ought to be aſſigned for his de-'ſerting her.'

'I am under no obligation, ſaid Mr. 'Trueworth, very gloomily, 'to give an 'account of my behaviour to any one 'whatever; but in conſideration of our 'friend-

'friendſhip, and the love I once had for 'your ſiſter, I ſhall make no ſcruple to 'tell you, that a woman of her humour 'would ſuit but ill with a man of mine; '— as to any farther eclairciſement of 'this affair, it is from herſelf alone you 'muſt receive it.' — 'She ſhewed me a 'letter from you, ſir,' cried Mr. Francis, haſtily. — 'That might then ſuffice to in-'form you, anſwered Mr. Trueworth, that 'in what I have done, I but obeyed the 'dictates of my honour.' — 'Honour!' cried the other, fiercely, and laying his hand on his ſword, 'What is it you mean, 'ſir? Did honour oppoſe your marriage 'with my ſiſter?'

'No menaces,' ſaid Mr. Trueworth, with a gravity which was pretty near diſ-dain, —'you know me incapable of fear; '— I have fought for your ſiſter, but 'will never fight againſt her.—I injure not 'her reputation: — on the contrary, I 'would defend it if unjuſtly attacked, 'even at the hazard of my life; but as 'to love or marriage, theſe are things 'now out of the queſtion, — we both, 'perhaps, have other views, and the leſs is 'ſaid of what is paſt the better.'

Mr. Francis naturally took fire on the leaſt ſuſpicion of an indignity offered to

him, but when once convinced of his miſtake, was no leſs ready to repent and acknowledge it; —he had ſeen many inſtances of the honour, generoſity, and ſincerity of Mr. Trueworth: he had alſo been witneſs of ſome of the levity and inconſiderateneſs of his ſiſter, and the reflection of a moment ſerved to make him ſee, this change had happened merely through her own ill conduct.

His rage abated even while the other was ſpeaking, but a deep concern remained behind, and throwing himſelf down in a chair, 'Into what vexations,' cried he, 'may not a whole family be plunged, 'through the indiſcretion of one woman?'

'Judge not too raſhly,' ſaid Mr. True-'worth; —Miſs Betſy may one day ſee a 'man ſo happy as to inſpire her with 'ſentiments far different from thoſe ſhe 'hitherto has entertained, and ſhe alſo 'may be more happy herſelf, with a man 'who loves her with leſs delicacy than I 'did.'

The brother of Miſs Betſy ſeemed not to take any notice of theſe words, but riſing in ſome confuſion, — 'Well, ſir, 'ſaid he, I ſhall trouble you no more 'upon this ſubject, — and am ſorry I

'have

'have done it now.'—Mr. Trueworth then told him, that though the intended alliance between them was broke off, he ſaw no occaſion that their friendſhip ſhould be ſo too;—that he ſhould be glad of an opportunity to return the favours he had received from him, in relation to his ſiſter, though his endeavours on that ſcore had not met with the deſired ſucceſs; and that he hoped they ſhould not live as ſtrangers while they continued in the ſame town:—to all this Mr. Francis made but very ſhort replies, either taking what he ſaid as words of courſe, or becauſe the diſorder of his own mind would not permit him to prolong the converſation.

It is likely Mr. Trueworth was not much troubled at the haſty leave this young gentleman took; for though he always had a very ſincere regard for him, yet the point on which he now had come, was tender, and could not be touched upon without giving him ſome pain:—he had no time however to make many reflections on the converſation that had paſſed between them.—A letter was brought him by a porter, who waiting for an anſwer, he immediately opened it, and found the contents as follows:

To Charles Trueworth, Eſq;

'Sir,

'Extraordinary merits ſeldom fail 'of having as extraordinary effects; — 'you have made a conqueſt of a heart 'without knowing it, which not the ut-'moſt endeavours of any other could 'ever ſubdue. — I am commiſſioned to 'acquaint you, that a lady of ſome con-'ſideration in the world, and a large for-'tune in her own hands, thinks you alone 'deſerve to be the maſter, both of that 'and of herſelf; but as ſhe is apprehen-'ſive of your being already engaged, 'begs you will be ſo generous as to con-'feſs the truth, that if ſo, ſhe may put a 'timely ſtop to the progreſs of her grow-'ing paſſion; — if not, you will, doubt-'leſs, hear more from her by the hand 'of,

'Sir,

'Your unknown ſervant.

'P.S. Pleaſe to ſend this back, with your 'anſwer wrote on the other ſide of the 'paper, which you may put up under 'a cover ſealed up, but without any 'direction. — Sincerity and ſecrecy are 'earneſtly requeſted.'

Mr.

Mr. Trueworth could not avoid looking on this adventure as a very odd one; yet whether the propoſal was real or feigned, the matter was wholly indifferent to him, and he heſitated not a moment what part he ſhould take in it; but ſat down immediately, and wrote, as deſired, the following anſwer:

To the UNKNOWN.

'SIR, or MADAM,

'THOUGH I know the honour with 'which you flatter me is more the effect 'of fortune than deſert, it would cer-'tainly make me vain and happy, were I 'not denied the power of accepting it.— 'The heart required of me by the lady is 'already diſpoſed of,—irrecoverably diſ-'poſed of, and I can only repay her good-'neſs by ſincerely wiſhing a return of 'her's, and with it all thoſe felicities ſhe 'would ſo laviſhly beſtow on,

'Her moſt obliged,

'And moſt humble ſervant,

'C. TRUEWORTH.'

'P.S. The lady may depend, that my 'ſecrecy ſhall be equal to the ſincerity 'I have ſhewn in this.'

He had no ſooner diſpatched the meſſenger who brought this, than a ſecond came, and preſented him with another, and had orders alſo to wait for an anſwer: — he preſently knew it came from Miſs Flora, and expected the contents to be ſuch as he found them on peruſing:

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Eſq;

'Moſt cruel and ungenerous man!

'LOTH I am to give you epithets 'like theſe, — my heart ſhudders, and 'my trembling hand is ſcarce able to 'guide my pen, in thoſe reproaches, which 'my reaſon tells me you deſerve; — 'how unkind, — how ſtabbing to the 'ſoul was your behaviour at our laſt 'meeting! — yet even then you pro-'miſed me to write; — I depended on 'that promiſe, and hope had not quite 'forſook me; — every knocking at the 'door, I expected was a meſſenger from 'you: — in vain I expected, — in vain 'I looked, — in vain I liſtened for the 'welcome mandate, and every diſap-'pointment threw me into freſh agonies.

'—I

'—I have ſent twice to the coffee-houſe, '—been there once in perſon, but could 'hear nothing of you:—O! what ſecret 'receſs now hides you from me!—What 'can have cauſed ſo terrible a reverſe in 'my ſo lately happy fate?—I fear to 'gueſs; for madneſs is in the thought! '—O! do not drive me to extremes!— 'Many women, with not half my love, 'or my deſpair, have run headlong into 'actions, which, in my cooler moments, 'I dread to think on.——Be aſſured, 'I cannot live,—will not live without 'you!—Torture me not any longer with 'ſuſpence!——Pronounce my doom at 'once!—But let it be from your own 'mouth that I receive it, that you, at leaſt, 'may be witneſs of the death you inflict, 'and be compelled to pity, if you cannot 'love,

'The moſt unfortunate,

'And moſt faithful of her ſex,

'F. MELLASIN.'

'P.S. I have charged the man, who 'brings you this, to find you where-'ſoever you are, and not leave you 'without an anſwer.'

Mr. Trueworth was in the utmoſt perplexity of mind on reading this diſtracted epiſtle. Of all the hours of his paſt life he could not recollect any one which gave him ſo much cauſe of repentance as that wherein he had commenced an amour with a woman of ſo violent a temper: — he had never loved her, and all the liking he ever had for her being now utterly eraſed by a more laudable impreſſion, the guilty pleaſures he had enjoyed with her, were now irkſome to his remembrance, and the more ſhe endeavoured to revive the tender folly in him, the more ſhe grew diſtaſteful to him.

It ſo little becomes a woman, whoſe characteriſtic ſhould be modeſty, to uſe any endeavours to enforce deſire, that thoſe who do it are ſure to convert love into indifference, and indifference into loathing and contempt: — even ſhe, who, with the greateſt ſeeming delicacy, labours to rekindle a flame once extinguiſhed, will find the truth of what Morat ſays in the play:

To love once paſs'd we cannot backward move
Call yeſterday again, and we may love.

Mr.

Mr. Trueworth, however, had ſo much pity for that unfortunate creature, that he would have given, perhaps, good part of his eſtate, that ſhe no longer loved him: but how to turn the tide of ſo extravagant a paſſion, he could not yet reſolve, and it being near the time, in which he knew they would expect him at Sir Bazil's, where he now dined every day, and the meſſenger who brought him the letter alſo growing impatient to be diſpatched, he wrote in haſte theſe few lines:

To Miſs Flora Mellasin.

'Madam,

'BUSINESS of the greateſt conſe-
'quence now calls upon me, and I have
'no time to write as I would do; but
'depend upon it I will ſend to you to-
'morrow morning, and either appoint a
'meeting, or let you know my real ſenti-
'ments in a letter,—'till when, I beg you
'will make yourſelf more eaſy, if you
'deſire to oblige him, who is,

'With the moſt unfeigned good wiſhes,

'Madam,

'Your moſt humble,

'And moſt obedient ſervant,

'C. Trueworth.

'P.S. I ſhall take it as a favour, madam, 'that you will henceforward forbear to 'make any enquiry concerning me at 'the coffee houſe or elſewhere.'

Having given this to Miſs Flora's porter, he haſted away to Sir Bazil's, there to compoſe his mind, after the embarraſsments it had ſuſtained that morning.

CHAP. IX.

Contains very little to the purpoſe.

MR. Francis Thoughtleſs had no ſooner left the lodgings of Mr. Trueworth, than he went directly to thoſe of his ſiſter Betſy, where, in the humour he then was, the reader will eaſily ſuppoſe, he could not be very good company:—after telling her he had ſeen Mr. Trueworth, and had ſome converſation with him on her account, — 'I am now convinced, ſaid 'he, of what before I doubted not, that 'by your own ill management, and want 'of a juſt ſenſe of what is for your in-'tereſt and happineſs, you have loſt an 'opportunity of eſtabliſhing both, which 'can

'can never be retrieved; — nor is this 'all, — your manner of behaviour not 'only ruins yourſelf, but involves all be- 'longing to you in endleſs quarrels and 'perplexities.'

Theſe were reproaches which Miſs Betſy had too much ſpirit to have borne from any one but a brother, and even to him, ſhe was far from yielding that ſhe had in any meaſure deſerved them: — 'I 'defy Trueworth himſelf,' cried ſhe, with all the reſentment of a diſappointed lover in her heart, 'to accuſe me of one 'action, that the ſtricteſt virtue could 'condemn.'

'Ah, ſiſter, replied he, do not let your 'vanity deceive you on this ſcore: — 'I ſee very plainly, that Mr. Trueworth 'regards you with too much indiffe- 'rence to retain reſentment for any treat- 'ment you have given him, — that he 'once loved you, I am well aſſured; 'that he no longer does ſo, is owing to 'yourſelf: — but I ſhall mention him no 'more, — the paſſion he had for you is 'extinguiſhed, I believe, beyond all poſ- 'ſibility of reviving, nor would I wiſh 'you to attempt: — I would only have 'you remember what Mr. Goodman ut- 'tered concerning you with almoſt his

'dying breath; for my own part, I have 'not been a witneſs of your conduct, 'ſince the unhappy brulèe I fell into on 'your account at Oxford, which I then 'hoped would be a ſufficient warning for 'your future behaviour.'

If Miſs Betſy had been leſs innocent, it is probable ſhe would have replied in a more ſatisfactory manner to her brother's reproaches; but the real diſdain ſhe always had for whatever had the leaſt tendency to diſhonour, made her zealous in defending herſelf only in things, of which ſhe was not accuſed, and ſilent in regard of thoſe, in which ſhe was judged blame-worthy.

'What avails your being virtuous? ſaid 'Mr. Francis: — I hope,—and I believe 'you are ſo; — but your reputation is of 'more conſequence to your family: — 'the loſs of the one might be concealed, 'but a blemiſh on the other brings cer-'tain infamy and diſgrace on yourſelf and 'all belonging to you.'

On this, ſhe aſſumed the courage to tell him, his way of reaſoning was neither juſt nor delicate. — 'Would you, ſaid 'ſhe, be guilty of a baſe action, rather 'than have it ſuſpected that you were 'ſo?'

'ſo?'—'No, anſwered he, but virtue is a 'different thing in our ſex, to what it is 'yours: — the forfeiture of what is called 'virtue in a woman is more a folly than 'a baſeneſs; but the virtue of a man is 'his courage, his conſtancy, his probity, 'which if he loſes, he becomes con-'temptible to himſelf, as well as to the 'world.'

'And certainly,' rejoined Miſs Betſy, with ſome warmth, 'the loſs of innocence 'muſt render a woman contemptible to 'herſelf, though ſhe ſhould happen to 'hide her tranſgreſſion from the world.'— 'That may be, ſaid Mr. Francis; but 'then her kindred ſuffer not through her 'fault: — the remorſe, and the vexation 'for what ſhe has done, is all her own.— 'Indeed, ſiſter, continued he, a woman 'brings leſs diſhonour upon a family, by 'twenty private ſins, than by one public 'indiſcretion.'

'Well, anſwered ſhe, I hope I ſhall 'always take care to avoid both the one 'and the other, for my own ſake.—As 'to indulging myſelf with the innocent 'pleaſures of the town, I have the ex-'ample of ſome ladies of the firſt quality, 'and beſt reputation, to juſtify me in it.'

Mr.

Mr. Thoughtleſs was about to make ſome reply, which, perhaps, would have been pretty keen, but was prevented by the coming in of her maid, who delivering a letter to her, and ſaying, 'From Sir 'Frederick Fineer, madam,' ſhe haſtily 'broke it open, and having read it, bid the maid let Sir Frederick's ſervant know ſhe would be at home.

'There, brother,' ſaid ſhe, giving him the letter, 'read that, and be convinced I 'have not loſt every good offer in loſing 'Mr. Trueworth.' — 'I wiſh you have 'not,' anſwered he ſullenly. — He took the paper, however, and read the contents of it, which were theſe:

To the divine arbitreſs of my fate, the omnipotently lovely Miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'O, GODDESS! more cruel than the 'avenging Nemiſis, what have I done, 'that like Ixion I muſt ſtill be tor-'tured on the wheel of everlaſting hopes 'and fears? —— I hoped yeſterday to 'have approached the ſhrine of your re-'ſplendent charms, but you had quitted 'the ſacred doom which you inhabit, and 'vouchſafed to bleſs ſome happier man-

'ſion

'ſion with your preſence, — perhaps a 'rival:—Oh, forbid it Heaven! — forbid 'it all ye ſtars that under the ſupreme, rule 'all beneath the moon! — the thought is 'terrible, and ſhocks the inmoſt cavities 'of my adoring jealous ſoul.—I kneel 'while I am writing, and implore you 'to grant me permiſſion to ſip a cup of 'nectar and ambroſia at your tea-table 'this afternoon;—and if you can, without 'injuſtice to ſuperior merit, debar all 'other intruders thence, that I may have 'liberty to pour forth my ejaculations at 'your feet. I am,

'With the moſt ardent devotion,

'Brighteſt refulgency of beauty,

'Your moſt adoring,

'And everlaſting ſlave,

'F. FINEER.'

As little as Mr. Francis at this time was diſpoſed to mirth, he could not, in ſpite of his ill humour, refrain laughing, on reading ſome expreſſions in this heroically learned epiſtle:—'I need not aſk, ſaid he, throwing the letter contemptuouſly on the table, 'who, or what this 'new adorer of yours is: — it is eaſy to 'ſee

'ſee he is either mad or a fool, or thinks 'to make you ſo.'

'I have as bad an opinion of his intel-'lects as you have, replied ſhe; but I 'aſſure you he is a baronet, and the pre-'ſumptive heir of a much greater title, 'and has an eſtate large enough to keep 'me a coach and twelve, if the cuſtom of 'the country permitted.'

Mr. Francis pauſed for a few moments, and after looking over the letter again,— 'I wiſh, ſaid he, inſtead of a fool of 'faſhion, he is not a knave in the diſguiſe 'of a coxcomb: — his ſtupidity ſeems 'to me to be too egregious to be natural, '—all his expreſſions have more the ap-'pearance of a ſtudied affectation, than of 'a real folly; — take care, ſiſter, I have 'heard there are many impoſtors in this 'town, who are continually on the watch 'for young ladies, who have loſt their 'parents, and live in the unguarded man-'ner you do.'

Miſs Betſy ſeemed to treat her brother's ſuſpicions on this head with a good deal of contempt: —— ſhe told him, that the perſon, at whoſe houſe ſhe became acquainted with Sir Frederick, knew his circumſtances perfectly well, — that he had

had a prodigious eſtate,—was of a very ancient and honourable family, and converſed with ſeveral people of the firſt quality in England:—'However, added ſhe, 'you may call here this afternoon, and 'ſee him yourſelf, if you pleaſe; for ac-'cording to my judgment, he has not wit 'enough to be an impoſtor.'

Mr. Francis replied, that he would be glad to ſee ſo extraordinary a perſon, if he were not obliged to go upon ſome buſineſs, relating to the commiſſion he was ſolliciting, which he feared would detain him beyond the hour;—'but with your 'leave, ſaid he, I will take this letter 'with me, and hear what my brother 'thinks of it.'

To this Miſs Betſy readily agreed, and he went away in ſomewhat of a better humour than he had entered, or that he had put her into by the ſevere reprimands he had given her.

She had a very tender regard for her brothers, but did not think it their province to preſcribe rules for her behaviour;—ſhe looked upon herſelf as a better judge in what manner it would become her to act, than they could poſſibly be, as having lived more years in London than

than either of them had done months, and if ſhe was willing to be adviſed, would not ſubmit to be directed by them.

Thus did her pride a while ſupport her ſpirits; but when ſhe reflected on the affair of Mr, Trueworth, and the reaſons ſhe had given him for ſpeaking and thinking of her in that cool and indifferent manner, ſhe found he now did, ſhe began to be ſomewhat leſs tenacious, and acknowledged within herſelf, that her brother Frank, excluſive of his friendſhip for that gentleman, had ſufficient cauſe to blame her conduct in that point, and the heat of paſſion, which had been raiſed by ſome expreſſions he had uttered being over, ſhe ceaſed to take unkindly what ſhe was now ſenſible had only been occaſioned by his zeal for her welfare.

She now ſaw in their true light all the miſtakes ſhe had been guilty of,—all her dangers,—all her eſcapes,—and bluſhed to remember, how ſhe had been plunged into the one, merely by her own inadvertency, and been bleſſed with the other, only by the interpoſition of ſome accident, altogether unforeſeen, and even unhoped for, by her.

She

She had alſo a more juſt and lively idea of the merits of Mr. Trueworth, than ever ſhe had been capable of entertaining, while he profeſſed himſelf her lover: — the amiableneſs of his perſon, — his fine underſtanding, his generoſity, — his bravery, — his wit, and the delicacy and elegance of his converſation, ſeemed to her impoſſible to be equalled; — ſhe conſidered too, that his eſtate was much beyond what her fortune could expect, and that even his family was ſuperior to her's, and could hot help being very ſenſibly affected, that ſhe had ſo raſhly thrown away her pretenſions to the heart of ſo valuable a man.

'Tis true,' ſaid ſhe, 'that if I had 'an inclination to marry, I have other 'offers: — Mr. Munden, by his way of 'living, muſt have a good eſtate, per-'haps not inferior to that of Mr. True-'worth: — the man has good ſenſe, and 'wants neither perſonal nor acquired en-'dowments, and I have tried both his 'love and conſtancy; — beſides, he lives 'always in town, has a taſte for the 'pleaſures of it, — a woman could not 'be very unhappy in being his wife. — 'Then there is Sir Frederick Fineer; — 'he is a fool indeed, — but he is a man

'of quality, and I know ſeveral ladies, 'who are the envy of their own ſex, and 'the toaſt of the other, and yet have fools 'for their huſbands.

In this manner did ſhe continue reaſoning within herſelf, 'till her head began to ache, and ſhe was luckily relieved from it, by the laſt-mentioned ſubject of her meditations.

He approached her with his accuſtomed formalities, firſt ſaluting the hem of her garment, then her hand, and laſtly her lips, which ſhe receiving with an air more than ordinary ſerious, and alſo making very ſhort replies to the fine ſpeeches he had prepared to entertain her with: — 'What invidious cloud,' ſaid he, 'ob-'ſcures the lightning of your eyes, and 'hides half the divinity from my raviſh'd 'ſight!' — 'People cannot be always in 'the ſame humour, Sir Frederick,' an-'ſwered ſhe. — 'Your's ſhould be always 'gay,' rejoined he, 'if once you were 'mine;—you ſhould do nothing but love 'and laugh, and dreſs, and eat and 'drink, and be adored; — ſpeak then, 'my angel,' continued he, 'when ſhall 'be the happy day? — Say, ſhall it be 'to-morrow?'

Here

Here it was not in her power to retain any part of her former gravity: — 'Bleſs 'me,' cried ſhe, 'to morrow! — What! 'marry to-morrow?—ſure, Sir Frederick, 'you cannot think of ſuch a thing? — 'Why, I have not ſo much as dreamt of 'it.' — 'No matter, anſwered he, 'you 'will have golden dreams enough in my 'embracces, —— defer then the mutual 'bliſs no longer, ——let it be to-morrow.' '—You are certainly mad, Sir Frederick, ſaid ſhe, 'but if I were enough ſo too, 'as really to conſent to ſuch a haſty nup-'tial, —— where pray are the prepara-'tions for it?'

'Oh, madam, as to that,' reſumed he, 'people of quality always marry in a 'deſhabille; — a new coach, — chariot, '— ſervants, — liveries, and rich cloaths 'for ourſelves, may all be got ready be-'fore we make our public appearance at 'court, or at church.' — 'But there are 'other things to be conſidered,' ſaid Miſs Betſy, laughing outright. — 'None of 'any importance,' replied he: — 'I will 'jointure you in my whole eſtate, — the 'writings ſhall be drawn to-night, and 'preſented to you with the wedding-'ring.'

'This

'This would be wonderful diſpatch in-
'deed,' ſaid ſhe; 'but, ſir, I have two
'brothers whom I muſt firſt conſult on
'the affair.' — Sir Frederick ſeemed ex-
'tremely ſtruck at theſe words, but reco-
vering himſelf as ſoon as he was able, 'I
'thought; madam,' cried he, 'you were
'entirely at your own diſpoſal.' — 'I am
'ſo, ſir, anſwered ſhe, 'but I love my
'brothers, and will do nothing without
'their approbation.' — 'Ah, cruel fair,'
cried he, 'little do you know the delicacy
'of my paſſion,— I muſt owe you wholly
'to yourſelf; — your brothers, no doubt,
'will favour my deſires, but 'tis your
'own free-will alone can make me bleſſed.
'— Tell me not then of brothers,' con-
'tinued he, 'but generouſly ſay you will
'be mine.'

Miſs Betſy was about to make ſome re-
ply, when word was brought that a ſervant
of the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs deſired to
ſpeak with her, on which ſhe aroſe haſtily,
and went to the top of the ſtair-caſe to
hear what meſſage he had to deliver to
her, and was pleaſingly ſurpriſed when he
told her, that his maſter deſired the fa-
vour of her company to ſupper immedi-
ately at his houſe. —As ſhe never had an
invitation there before, ſhe was at a loſs

to

to gueſs what could have cauſed ſo ſudden an alteration; —ſhe aſked the fellow what company was there: — he told her, only Mr. Francis and another gentleman whoſe name he knew not, but believed they wanted her on ſome affairs concerning the late Mr. Goodman, becauſe as he was waiting, he heard them often mention that gentleman and Lady Mellaſin.

Though ſhe could not conceive on what purpoſe ſhe was to be conſulted on any thing relating to Mr. Goodman, yet ſhe was extremely glad that any occaſion had happened to induce her brother to ſend for her to his houſe, and ordered the man to acquaint his maſter, that ſhe would not fail to wait upon him, with as much expedition as a chair could bring her.

On her return to Sir Frederick, ſhe told him, ſhe had received a ſummons from her elder brother, which ſhe was under an indiſpenſable neceſſity of complying with, ſo deſired he would defer, 'till another opportunity, any farther diſcourſe on the ſubject they had been talking of. — Having ſaid this, ſhe called haſtily for her fan and gloves, and at the ſame time gave orders for a chair. — Sir Frederick ſeemed very much confounded, but finding that any attempt to detain her

her would be impracticable, took his leave, ſaying, 'You are going to your brother's, 'madam:' To which ſhe anſwering, ſhe was ſo. 'I beg then, madam, rejoined he, 'that you will not mention any thing 'concerning me, or the paſſion I have for 'you, 'till I have the honour of ſeeing 'you again. — Be aſſured,' continued he, 'I have mighty reaſons for this requeſt, 'and ſuch, as I flatter myſelf you will 'allow to be juſt. — He ſaid no more, but perceiving ſhe was ready, led her down ſtairs, and having put her into a chair, went into that which waited for himſelf, little ſatisfied with the ſucceſs of this viſit.

Though the motives on which Miſs Betſy's company was deſired in ſo much hurry, by a brother who had never before once invited her, may ſeem ſtrange, yet as that incident was but the conſequence of other matters, which yet remain untold, regularity requires they ſhould firſt be diſcuſſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Contains an account of ſome tranſactions, which, though they may not be very pleaſing in the repetition, nor are of any great conſequence to Miſs Betſy, would render this hiſtory extremely deficient, if omitted.

AS Lady Mellaſin has made ſo conſiderable a figure in the former parts of this hiſtory, the reader may perhaps now begin to think ſhe has been too long neglected, it is therefore proper to proceed directly to ſome account, how that guilty and unfortunate woman behaved, after being driven in the manner already related from the houſe of her much-injured huſband.—Mr. Goodman was adviſed by his lawyer to be extremely private in the proſecution he was going to commence againſt her, and by no means to let her know the ſecret of her criminal converſation with Marplus had been diſcovered to him:—this ſeemed a caution neceſſary to be obſerved, in order to prevent her from taking any meaſures, either to invalidate the evidence of the witneſſes, or

prevail upon them to abſcond, when the proof of what they had ſworn againſt her ſhould be expected: — the whole detection of her guilt was deſigned to come at once upon her like a thunderclap, and thereby all the little efforts of artifice and chichanery, to which ſhe, doubtleſs, would otherwiſe have had recourſe, be rendered of no uſe, nor give the leaſt impediment to juſtice.

Accordingly, this zealous aſſertor of his client's cauſe went to viſit her, as of his own good will; — flattered her with the hope, that her huſband would ſoon be prevailed upon to take her home again, and lent her ſeveral ſmall ſums of money to ſupply her neceſſities, ſaying, at the ſame time, that when matters were made up between them, and all was over, he very well knew Mr. Goodman would return it to him with thanks.

This ſtratagem had the effect it was intended for; — it not only kept her from attempting any thing of the nature abovementioned, but alſo from running Mr. Goodman into debt, which certainly ſhe might have done, on ſome pretence or other, in ſpite of all the care and means that could have been taken to deſtroy her credit.

It muſt be acknowledged, indeed, that acting in this manner was a prodigious piece of diſſimulation; but, at the ſame time, it muſt be acknowledged alſo, that it was abundantly juſtified by the cauſe, and practiſed for the moſt laudable end, to ſerve an honeſt, worthy gentleman, his friend and client, againſt a woman, who had wronged him in the tendereſt point, and who was capable of making uſe of the vileſt methods to elude the puniſhment her crimes deſerved; and as a great author tells us,

'It is a kind of ſtupid honeſty,
'Among known knaves, to play upon the
'ſquare.'

Lady Mellaſin, however, was lulled into ſo perfect a ſecurity by her dependance on the good-nature of her huſband, and the tender affection he had always ſhewn to her, as well as by the high character ſhe had always heard of the lawyer's veracity, that ſhe was more eaſy than could have been expected, in a woman of her ſituation, even though it had been as ſhe was made to believe.

She received, and returned, with her uſual politeneſs and gaiety, the viſits that

were made her by all thoſe who thought proper to continue an acquaintance with her; — ſhe pretended that it was only a little family conteſt, that had ſeparated her from Mr. Goodman for a ſhort time; and always mentioned him with ſo much kindneſs and reſpect, as made every one believe, there was nothing between them but what would be eaſily made up.

This was indeed the moſt prudent method ſhe could take, not only to preſerve her own reputation to the world, but alſo to give Mr. Goodman a high idea of her conduct, if what ſhe ſaid ſhould happen to be repeated to him.

She was every day in expectation, that through her own good management, and the interceſſion of the lawyer, whom ſhe now took to be her ſtaunch friend, all would be over, and ſhe ſhould be recalled home, when a citation to appear before the doctors of the civil law was delivered to her, by an officer belonging to that court.

It is more eaſy to conceive than deſcribe her diſtraction, at ſo unlooked-for a turn; — ſhe now found, that her intrigue with Marplus was diſcovered, and that all ſhe had to dread, was like to fall upon

upon her by that event; — her perplexity was alſo greatly increaſed, by her not being able to find out by whom, or by what means ſhe had been betrayed; — ſhe ſent immediately in ſearch of Marplus, whom, ſince his arreſting Mr. Goodman, ſhe had never once ſeen, nor heard any thing of; but all the information ſhe could get of him, was, that he had been thrown in priſon by Mr. Goodman, and after confinement of a few days, had been releaſed, and was gone nobody knew where, but as it was ſuppoſed out of England; —- that his wife had likewiſe removed from her lodgings, but whether with an intention to follow him, or not, no certain intelligence could be given.

As this unhappy woman, therefore, neither knew on what foundation the accuſation againſt her was built, nor what evidences could be produced to prove it, ſhe might very well be bewildered in her thoughts, and not know what courſe to take; yet amidſt all theſe matters of aſtoniſhment, —— oppreſſed with grief, and ſtruck with horror at the near proſpect of approaching infamy, ſhe had courage, and preſence enough of mind, to enable her to do every thing that was neceſſary for her defence in ſo bad a cauſe.

Mr. Goodman's indiſpoſition putting a ſtop to the proceſs, ſhe had time to conſult with thoſe whom ſhe found moſt qualified for the purpoſe; —— her chief agent was a pettyfogger, or underſtrapper in the law, one who knew all thoſe quirks and evaſions, which are called the knaviſh part of it, and as the extreme indigence of his circumſtances made him ready to undertake any thing, though never ſo deſperate, provided it afforded a proſpect of advantage, ſo he had impudence and cunning enough to go through with it, even to the hazard of his ears.

This man kept up her ſpirits, by aſſuring her, he would find ways and means ſo to puzzle the cauſe, that nothing ſhould be clearly proved againſt her; but there was no opportunity for him to exerciſe his abilities this way, for Mr. Goodman's death ſoon after furniſhed him with another.—— Lady Mellaſin was no ſooner informed, by ſpies ſhe kept continually about Mr. Goodman's houſe, that his life was deſpaired of, than they ſet about making his will; — the firſt article of which, after the prelude uſual in ſuch writings, was this.

IMPRIMIS,

'IMPRIMIS, I give and bequeath to 'my dear and well-beloved wife Mar-'garet, Lady Mellaſin Goodman, the full 'ſum of thirty thouſand pounds of law-'ful money of Great Britain, over and 'above what otherwiſe ſhe might lay 'claim to as my widow, in conſideration 'of the great wrong I have done her 'through the inſinuations of malitious 'and evil-minded perſons, which I now 'heartily repent me of, and hope, that 'God and ſhe will forgive me for it.'

Then followed ſome other legacies to ſeveral of his kindred, and thoſe of his friends, whom he had been known to have been the moſt intimate with; but the ſums to each were very trifling, and did not amount in the whole to above ſeven or eight hundred pounds. — As every one, who had the leaſt acquaintance with Mr. Goodman, was very well convinced, that he had always intended his nephew for his heir, the pretended will went on in this manner.

'Item, I give and bequeath to my 'dear nephew, Edward Goodman, the 'ſon of Nathaniel Goodman, and of Ca-'therine his wife, late of Bengal, in the 'Eaſt-Indies, the whole reſidue of my

'effects, whatſoever and whereſoever they 'ſhall be found at my demiſe; — pro-'vided, that he, the ſaid Edward Good-'man, ſhall take to be his lawful wife, 'Flora Mellaſin, only daughter, and re-'maining iſſue of Sir Thomas Mellaſin, 'Bart. and of the above-mentioned Mar-'garet his wife; but in caſe that either 'party ſhall refuſe to enter into ſuch mar-'riage, then, that he, the ſaid Edward 'Goodman, ſhall be obliged to pay to 'the ſaid Flora Mellaſin, the full ſum of 'five thouſand pounds of lawful money 'of Great Britain, in conſideration of the 'misfortunes ſhe has ſuffered, by the in-'jury I have done her mother.'

This impudent piece of forgery was ſigned Samuel Goodman, — in a character ſo like that gentleman's, that when compared with other papers of his own hand-writing, the difference could not be diſtinguiſhed by thoſe who were beſt acquainted with it: — two perſons alſo of the lawyer's procuring ſet their names as witneſſes.

Notwithſtanding the flagrancy of this attempt, Lady Mellaſin flattered herſelf with the hopes of its ſucceſs, and on Mr. Goodman's death threw in a caveat againſt the real will, and ſet up this pretended one.

On

On the other hand, though one would imagine there needed but little ſkill for the detection of ſo groſs an impoſition, yet Mr. Goodman's lawyer thought proper to get all the help he could to corroborate the truth. — The piece of forgery was dated about ten days before Mr. Goodman died; — he knew, that the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs came every day to viſit him, during the whole time of his ſickneſs, and that Miſs Betſy, at the time this will was ſuppoſed to be made, actually lived in the houſe, and that neither of theſe two could be totally ignorant of ſuch a tranſaction, in caſe any ſuch had been.

It was therefore at the lawyer's requeſt, that Miſs Betſy was ſent for to her brother's houſe; — ſhe anſwered with a great deal of readineſs, to all the queſtions he put to her, according to the beſt of her knowledge, particularly, as to that concerning the making the will, ſhe ſaid, that ſhe had never heard the leaſt mention of any lawyer but himſelf coming to Mr. Goodman's, during the whole time of his ſickneſs, and that ſhe verily believed, no will, but that drawn up by him, and which all the family knew of, could poſſibly be made by Mr. Goodman's

orders, or in his houſe; and as to the article in the pretended will, relating to Miſs Flora, nothing could be a more palpable forgery, becauſe Mr. Goodman had offered five hundred pounds with her in marriage to a linnen-draper, not above ſix weeks before his parting with Lady Mellaſin, 'which,' added ſhe, 'is a very 'plain proof, that he never intended him 'for his nephew.'

All the time Miſs Betſy ſtayed, the whole diſcourſe was on this affair, and ſhe had no opportunity, as the lawyer was preſent, to acquaint her brothers with any thing concerning Sir Frederick Fineer, as otherwiſe it was her full intention to have done, after the ſurprizing injunction he had laid upon her of ſecrecy, in regard of his paſſion, and every thing relating to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Is very well deſerving the attention of all thoſe who are about to marry.

WHILE Miſs Flora was buoyed up with the expectation, that her mother would ſoon be reconciled to Mr. Goodman, ſhe abated not of her former gaiety, and thought of nothing but indulging her amorous inclinations with the man ſhe liked; but when once thoſe expectations ceaſed, her ſpirits began to fail: — ſhe now found it neceſſary for her intereſt, as well as pleaſure, to preſerve, if poſſible, the affection of her lover; —ſhe knew not what dreadful conſequences the proſecution, Mr. Goodman was about to exhibit againſt her mother, might be attended with, and trembled to think, ſhe muſt ſhare with her the double load of infamy and penury, and rightly judged, that a man of Mr. Trueworth's fortune, honour, and good-nature, would not ſuffer a woman, with whom he continued a tender communication, to be oppreſſed with any ills his purſe could relieve her from: — the apprehenſions, therefore, that ſhe might one day be reduced to ſtand in

need of his ſupport, aſſiſted the real paſſion ſhe had for him, and made her feel, on the firſt appearance of his growing coldneſs towards her, all thoſe horrors, thoſe diſtractions, which her letters to him had ſo lively repreſented.

On his ceaſing to make any fixed appointment with her, and from ſeeing him every day, to ſeeing her once in three or four days, gave her, with reaſon, the moſt terrible alarms; — but when, after an abſence of near a week, ſhe had followed him to the coffee-houſe, the cool and indifferent reception ſhe there met with, gave her, indeed, a mortal ſtab to all her hopes, and ſhe no longer heſitated to pronounce her own doom, and cry out, ſhe was undone.

The excuſe he made of buſineſs was too weak, — too trite, — too common-place, to gain any credit with her, or alleviate her ſorrows;—ſhe knew the world too well to imagine a gay young gentleman, like him, would forego whatever he thought a pleaſure, for any buſineſs he could poſſibly have; — ſhe doubted not but there was a woman in the caſe, and the thoughts that, while ſhe was in vain expecting him, he was ſolliciting thoſe favours from a rival, ſhe had ſo laviſhly beſtowed and

languiſhed

languiſhed to repeat, fired her jealous brain, even to a degree of frenzy.

Awhile ſhe raved with all the wild deſpair of ill requited burning love, but other emotions ſoon roſe in her diſtracted boſom not to controul, but add freſh fewel to the flame already kindled there:—'My cir-'cumſtances!' cried ſhe;—my wretched 'circumſtances!—What will become of 'me?—— involved in my mother's 'ſhame, he will, perhaps, make that a 'pretence for abandoning me to thoſe mis-'fortunes, I thought I might have depended on him to relieve.'

However, as the little billet, in anſwer to her laſt letter to him, contained a promiſe, that he would write to her the next day, ſhe endeavoured, as much as ſhe was able, to compoſe herſelf 'till that time, though ſhe was far from hoping the explanation ſhe expected to receive in it, would afford any conſolation to her tormented mind.

Mr. Trueworth alſo, in the mean time, was not without his own anxieties:—a man of honour frequently finds more difficulty in getting rid of a woman he is weary of, and loves him, than obtaining a woman he loves, and is in purſuit of; but this gentle-

gentleman had a more than ordinary perplexity to ſtruggle through:—few women would go the lengths Miſs Flora had done for the accompliſhment of her deſires, and he eaſily ſaw, by the whole tenor of her behaviour, ſhe would go as great, and even more to continue the enjoyment of them.

Glad would he have been to have brought her by degrees to an indifference for him,— to have prevailed on her to ſubmit her paſſion to the government of her reaſon, and to be convinced, that an amour, ſuch as their's had been, ought to be looked upon only as a tranſient pleaſure;— to be continued while mutual inclination and convenience permitted, and when broke off remembered but as a dream.

But this he found was not to be done with a woman of Miſs Flora's temper;— he therefore thought it beſt not to keep her any longer in ſuſpence, but let her know at once the revolution in her fate, as to that point, which regarded him, and the true motive that had occaſioned it, which he accordingly did in theſe terms:

To

To Miſs FLORA MELLASIN.

'MADAM,

'IT is with very great difficulty I em-
'ploy my pen to tell you, it is wholly in-
'convenient for us ever to meet again, in
'the manner we have lately done; but I
'flatter myſelf you have too much good
'ſenſe and too much honour, not to for-
'give what all laws, both human and di-
'vine, oblige me to.—I am entering into
'a ſtate, which utterly forbids the conti-
'nuance of thoſe gallantries, which before
'pleaded their excuſe;—in fine, I am
'going to be married, and it would be
'the higheſt injuſtice in me to expect that
'fidelity, which alone can make me happy
'in a wife, if my own conduct did not ſet
'her an example.

'Though I muſt ceaſe to languiſh for
'a repetition of thoſe favours you have
'bleſſed me with, yet be aſſured I ſhall
'always remember them with gratitude,
'and the beſt good wiſhes for the proſpe-
'rity of the fair beſtower.

'I ſend you back all the teſtimonies I
'have received of your tenderneſs, that
'are in my power to return:—It belongs
'to yourſelf to make uſe of your utmoſt
endea-

'endeavours for the recovery of the heart 'which dictated them.—This I earneſtly 'entreat of you, and in the hope that you 'will ſoon accompliſh a work ſo abſo-'lutely neceſſary for your peace and repu-'tation, I remain,

'As far as honour will permit,

'MADAM,

'Your moſt obliged,

'And moſt humble ſervant,

'C. TRUEWORTH.'

Mr. Trueworth flattered himſelf, that ſo plain a declaration of his ſentiments and intentions, would put a total end to all future correſpondence between them, and having looked it over, after he had finiſhed, and found it ſuch as he thought proper for the purpoſe, put it under a cover, with all the letters he had received from Miſs Flora, 'not excepting the firſt invitation ſhe had made him, under the title of the Incognita, and ſent away the packet by a porter; for he had never entruſted the ſervants with the conveyance of any epiſtle from him to that lady.

Miſs

Miſs Flora, from the moment her eyes were open in the morning, if it can be ſuppoſed ſhe had any ſleep that night, had been watching with the moſt racking impatience for the arrival of Mr. Trueworth's meſſenger; — ſhe wiſhed, but dreaded more the eclairciſement, which ſhe expected would be contained in the mandate he had promiſed to ſend, yet was diſtracted for the certainty, how cruel ſoever it might prove.

At length it came, and with it a confirmation of even worſe than the moſt terrible of her apprehenſions had ſuggeſted: —the ſight of her own letters on her opening it, almoſt threw her into a ſwoon; but when her ſtreaming eyes had greedily devoured the contents of the billet that accompanied them, exceſs of deſperation ſtruck her for ſome moments ſtupid, and rendered her mind inactive as her frame.

But when awakened from this lethargy of ſilent grief, ſhe felt all the horrors of a fate ſhe had ſo much dreaded:—fruſtrated at once in every hope, that love or intereſt had preſented to her, words cannot paint the wildneſs of her fancy, — ſhe tore her hair and garments, and ſcarce ſpared that face,

face, ſhe had taken ſo much pains to ornament, for wanting charms to ſecure the conqueſt it had gained.

But with the more violence theſe tourbillions of the mind rage for a while, the ſooner they ſubſide, and all is huſhed again; — as I remember to have ſomewhere read,

'After a tempeſt, when the winds are laid,
'The calm ſea wonders at the wreck it made.'

So this unhappy and abandoned creature, too much deſerving of the fate ſhe met with, having exhauſted her whole ſtock of tears, and waſted all the breath that life could ſpare, in fruitleſs exclamations, the paſſions which had raiſed theſe commotions in her ſoul, became more weak, and the beguiler Hope once more returned, to lull her wearied ſpirits into a ſhort-lived eaſe.

She now ſaw the folly of venting her rage upon herſelf; — that to give way to grief and deſpair would avail her nothing, but only ſerve to render her more miſerable; — that inſtead of ſitting tamely down, and meanly lamenting her misfortune

tune in the loſs of a lover, on whom ſhe had built ſo much, ſhe ought rather to exert all the courage, reſolution, and artifice ſhe was miſtreſs of, in contriving ſome way of preventing it, if poſſible.

'He is not yet married,' ſaid ſhe;—'the irrevocable words are not yet paſt;'—I have already broke off his courtſhip 'to one woman,—why may I not be as 'ſucceſsful in doing ſo with another?—'He cannot love the preſent engroſſer of 'his heart more than he did Miſs Betſy 'Thoughtleſs,—'tis worth, at leaſt, the 'pains of an attempt.'

The firſt ſtep ſhe had to take towards the execution of her deſign, was to find out the name, condition, and dwelling of her happy rival, and this ſhe thought there would be no great difficulty in doing, as ſhe doubted not but Mr. Trueworth viſited her every day, and it would be eaſy for her to employ a perſon to watch where he went, and afterwards to make the proper enquiries.

But, in the mean time, it required ſome conſideration how to behave to that gentleman, ſo as to preſerve in him ſome ſort of eſteem for her, without which ſhe rightly judged it would be impoſſible for her ever to

to recover his love, in caſe ſhe ſhould be ſo fortunate as to ſeparate him from the preſent object of his flame.

She knew very well, that all teſtimonies of deſpair, in a woman no longer loved, only create uneaſineſs in the man who occaſioned it, and but ſerve to make him more heartily wiſh to get rid of her; ſhe therefore found it beſt, as it certainly was, to pretend to fall in with Mr. Trueworth's way of thinking, — ſeem to be convinced by his reaſons, and ready to ſubmit whatever ſuited with his intereſt or convenience: —it was ſome time before ſhe could bring herſelf into a fit temper for this act of diſſimulation, but ſhe at laſt arrived at it, and gave a proof how great a proficient ſhe was in it, by the following lines:

To Charles Trueworth, Eſq;

'Dear Sir,

'I AM apt to believe you as little expected as deſired an anſwer to the eclairciſement of yeſterday, nor would I have given you the trouble of this, but to aſſure you, it ſhall be the laſt of any kind you ever ſhall receive from me. — Yes, —I have now done with reproaches and complaints,—I have nothing to alledge againſt

'againſt you,—nothing to accuſe you of:
'—could the fond folly of my tender paſ-
'ſion have given me leiſure for a mo-
'ment's reflection, I had foreſeen, that the
'misfortune, which is now fallen upon
'me, was inevitable. — I am now con-
'vinced, that I ought not to have hoped
'that the unbounded happineſs I ſo lately
'enjoyed, could be of any long duration;
'—that a man of your fortune and figure
'in the world, muſt one day marry; —
'names and families muſt be ſupported,
'and your's is too conſiderable for you to
'ſuffer it to be extinct:---- I muſt not,
'---- I will not, therefore, repine at a
'thing, which, in my cooler moments, I
'cannot but look upon as eſſential to your
'honour and convenience. ---- Had you
'quitted me on any other ſcore, I can-
'not anſwer but I might have been huried
'into extravagancies diſpleaſing to you,
'and unbecoming of myſelf: --- but here
'I muſt reſign, and am determined to do
'ſo, with the ſame patience, in ſhew at
'leaſt, as if I had never loved. --- I will
'not tell you the agonies I have ſuſtained
'in the cruel conflict, between my reaſon
'and my paſſion, in making this reſo-
'lution:---it is ſufficient for you to know,
'that the former has the victory. ---More
'might too much affect your gene-

rous

'rous nature; beſides, when woes are 'remedileſs, they are beſt borne in ſi-'lence.

'Farewell! --- Oh, farewell for ever! '---may you find every thing in the happy 'ſhe you make your choice of, to give 'you laſting bliſs; and, to complete all, 'may ſhe love you with the ſame ar-'dency, tenderneſs, and diſintereſtedneſs, 'as her, who muſt now only ſubſcribe 'herſelf,

'At an eternal diſtance!

'Dear, dear SIR,

'Your moſt faithful friend,

'And humble ſervant,

'F. MELLASIN.'

This letter, which it muſt be confeſſed, was wrote artfully enough, had all the effect it was intended for, on the mind of Mr. Trueworth; — it not only afforded him an infinity of contentment, as he hoped ſhe would ſoon be enabled to baniſh all thoſe diſturbed emotions, which naturally attend the breaking off an acquaintance, ſuch as their's had been, but it alſo eſtabliſhed in him, a very high idea

idea of her good underſtanding, — diſintereſted affection, — honour, and ſincerity; but how long he continued in this favourable opinion, as to the three laſt mentioned qualifications, will hereafter be ſhewn.

In the mean time, ſomething happened, which, as he was a man juſt, even to the extremeſt nicety, gave him, according to his way of thinking, a great deal of reaſon to reproach himſelf.

CHAP. XII.

Miſs Betſy's innocence, as to the Denham affair, fully cleared up to Mr. Trueworth, by a very extraordinary accident.

MR. Trueworth had made ſo great a progreſs in his courtſhip, that the ſincerity of Miſs Harriot got the better of her baſhfulneſs, even ſo far as to confeſs to him, it was with pleaſure ſhe yielded to the perſuaſions of her friends, in favour of his love, and that he had infinitely the preference of all mankind in her eſteem; in fine, her behaviour was ſuch, as left nothing

nothing wanting but the ceremony to aſſure him of his happineſs.

Sir Bazil alſo having concluded every thing with the father of his miſtreſs, brought that young lady acquainted with his ſiſters, who, highly approving their brother's choice, ſoon treated her, and were treated by her with the ſame affection and familiarity, as if already united.

There were few hours, excepting thoſe allotted by nature and cuſtom for repoſe, which this amiable company did not paſs together; the old gentleman, who was extremely good humoured, when nothing relating to the parting with his money came on the carpet, would frequently make one among them, and being one day more than ordinary chearful, told Mr. Trueworth, that as he found the two weddings were to be ſolemnized in one day, and he ſhould give his daughter's hand to Sir Bazil, deſired he might alſo have the honour of beſtowing Miſs Harriot's upon him; — to which Mr. Trueworth replied, that he ſhould joyfully receive her from any hands, but more particularly from his; — and that he took the offer he made him as a very great favour:—on this, the other grew very

very gay, and ſaid abundance of merry things, to the no ſmall expence of bluſhes, both in his daughter and Miſs Harriot.

It is impoſſible for any lover, while waiting for the conſummation of their wiſhes, to enjoy a more uninterrupted felicity, than did Sir Bazil and Mr. Trueworth;—continually bleſt with the ſociety of their dear miſtreſſes, and receiving from them all the marks that a virtuous affection could beſtow, yet both of them found it requiſite to contrive every day ſome new party of pleaſure or other, in order to beguile the neceſſary, though to them tedious, time it took up in drawing of writings, and other preparations for the much longed-for nuptials, which Mrs. Wellair did not fail to do all on her part to haſten, being impatient to return to her family, whence ſhe had been abſent longer than ſhe had intended.

Sir Bazil and Mr. Trueworth having been taking a little walk in the park one morning, the former finding himſelf ſo near the habitation of Miſs Mabel, could not forbear calling on her, though ſhe was to dine that day at his houſe, and Mr. Trueworth readily accompanied him: —that lady was then at her toilet, but made no ſcruple of admitting them into

her dreſſing room, where they had ſcarce ſeated themſelves, when her woman, who was waiting, was called out by a footman to ſpeak to ſome people, who, he ſaid, were very importunate to ſee Miſs Mabel, and would take no anſwer from him.

'Rude gueſts, indeed, cried Miſs Mabel, 'that will not take an anſwer from a ſervant:—Who are they?'—'I never ſaw 'them before, madam, replied the footman; but the one is a woman of a very 'mean appearance, and the other, I believe, is a ſoldier:—I told them your 'ladyſhip had company, and could not be 'ſeen, but the man ſaid he only begged 'one word with you,—that he was juſt 'come from abroad, and wanted to know 'where he might ſee his child, and a deal 'of ſuch ſtuff;—the woman is almoſt as 'impertinent as the man, and I cannot get 'them from the door.'

'I will lay my life upon it, madam, 'ſaid the waiting-maid, that this is the 'father of the child, that you and Miſs 'Betſy Thoughtleſs have been ſo good 'to keep ever ſince the mother's death.' '—I verily believe thou haſt hit upon 'the right, cried Miſs Mabel;—pri-'thee go down, and if it be as thou 'imagineſt,

'imagines, bid them come up,——I will 'ſee them.'

The maid went as ſhe was ordered, and immediately returned with two perſons, ſuch as the footman had deſcribed:—the woman was the firſt that advanced, and after dropping two or three curtſies to each of the company, addreſſed herſelf to Miſs Mabel in theſe words:—'I do 'not know, madam, ſaid ſhe, whether 'your ladyſhip may remember me, but I 'nurſed poor Mrs. Jinks, your ladyſhip's 'ſempſtreſs and clear-ſtarcher, all the 'time of her lying in, when your ladyſhip 'and madam Betſy Thoughtleſs were ſo 'good as to ſtand god-mothers, and after-'wards took the child, that it might not go 'to the pariſh.'

'I remember you very well, replied 'Miſs Mabel; but pray what is your 'buſineſs with me now?'——'Why, 'madam, ſaid ſhe, your ladyſhip muſt 'know, that Mrs. Jinks's huſband has 'ſeen his folly at laſt,—has left the 'army, and is reſolved to take up and 'ſettle in the world;—ſo, madam, if your 'ladyſhip pleaſes, he would willingly have 'his child.'

'O! doubtleſs, he may have his child, 'rejoined Miſs Mabel; — but hearkye, 'friend, continued ſhe, turning to the 'man, are you able to keep your child?' '— Yes, madam, anſwered he, coming 'forward, thank God, and good friends: '—I had an uncle down in Northamp-'tonſhire, who died a while ago, and left 'me a pretty little farm there;—and ſo, 'as my neighbour here was telling you, I 'would not have my child a burthen to 'any body.'——'If we had thought 'it a burthen, ſaid Miſs Mabel, we ſhould 'not have taken it upon us; — however, 'I am glad you are in circumſtances 'to maintain it yourſelf; —— your wife 'was a very honeſt, induſtrious woman, 'and ſuffered a great deal through your 'neglect; but I hope you will make 'it up in the care of the child ſhe has 'left behind.'

'Aye, madam, replied he, wiping his 'eyes, I have nothing elſe to remember 'her; — I did not uſe her ſo well as 'ſhe deſerved, that's certain; but I have 'ſowed all my wild oats, as the ſaying 'is, and I wiſh ſhe were alive to have the 'benefit of it.'

'That

'That cannot be, interrupted the wo-
'man, ſo don't trouble good madam with
'your ſorrowful ſtories; —if her ladyſhip
'will be ſo good only to give us direc-
'tions where to find the child, for we
'have been to madam Betſy's, and her
'ladyſhip was not at home, ſo we made
'bold to come here.' — 'Yes, madam,
'cried he, for my colonel comes to town
'in a day or two, and I ſhall get my
'diſcharge, and have no more to do
'with the ſervice, ſo would willingly have
'my child to take down with me to the
'farm.

Miſs Mabel made no other anſwer to this, than ſaying, it was very well, and immediately gave them the direction they requeſted, to Goody Buſhman's, at Denham. — 'I cannot tell you exactly where
'the houſe is, ſaid ſhe; but you will
'eaſily find her, the huſband is a gar-
'dener, and ſhe has been a nurſe for many
'years.'

The fellow ſeemed extremely pleaſed, thanked her as well as he could in his homely faſhion, and deſired ſhe would be ſo kind to give his duty to the other lady, and thank her alſo, for her part of the favours both his wife and child had

received; nor had he forgot his manners ſo far, as not to accompany the teſtimonies of his gratitude with a great many low ſcrapes, 'till he got quite out of the room.

After this Sir Bazil began to grow a little pleaſant with Miſs Mabel, concerning the motherly part ſhe had been acting:— 'You do me more honour than I deſerve, 'ſaid ſhe laughing; for it was but half a 'child I had to take care of, ſo conſe-'quently I could but be half a mother.— 'I am glad, however, continued ſhe, more 'ſeriouſly, that my little god-daughter has 'found a father.'

While they were talking in this manner, the old gentleman happening to come in, and hearing Sir Bazil was above with his daughter, ſent to deſire to ſpeak with him in his cloſet.

Miſs Mabel being now alone with Mr. Trueworth, thought ſhe ſaw ſomething in his countenance which very much ſurpriſed her, ——— 'You are penſive ſir,' ſaid ſhe; — 'I hope the mention we 'have been making of Miſs Betſy has 'given you no alarm.' — 'A very great 'one, anſwered he; but not on the ac-'count you may perhaps imagine: — I 'have

'have wronged that lady in the moſt 'cruel manner; — and though the injury 'I have done her went no farther than 'my own heart, yet I never can forgive 'myſelf for harbouring ſentiments, which 'I now find were ſo groundleſs and un-'juſt.'

As it was not poſſible for Miſs Mabel to comprehend the meaning of theſe words, ſhe intreated him, ſomewhat haſtily, to explain the myſtery they ſeemed to contain: on which he made no ſcruple of repeating to her the ſubſtance of the letter he had received; — his going down to Denham, in order to convince himſelf more fully, and the many circumſtances, which, according to all appearances, corroborated the truth of that infamous ſcandal.

Never was aſtoniſhment equal to that Miſs Mabel was in, on hearing the narrative of ſo monſtrous a piece of villainy: — 'Good God! cried ſhe, I know 'Miſs Betſy has many enemies, who ſet 'all her actions in the worſt light, and 'conſtrue every thing ſhe ſays and does 'into meanings ſhe is ignorant of herſelf; 'but this is ſo impudent, — ſo unpara-'lelled a ſlander, as I could not have

'thought the malice of either men or de-
'vils could have invented.'

'Indeed, madam, ſaid Mr. Trueworth,
'ſhould fortune ever diſcover to me the
'author of this execrable falſhood, I know
'no revenge I could take, that would be
'ſufficient, both for traducing the inno-
'cence of that lady, and the impoſition
'practiſed upon myſelf.' — Miſs Mabel
'agreed with him, that no puniſhment
could be too bad for the inventors of ſuch
cruel aſperſions, and having a little vented
her indignation on all who were capable
of the like practices: — 'I ſuppoſe then,
'ſaid ſhe, that it was owing to this
'wicked ſtory that you deſiſted your viſits
'to Miſs Betſy.'

'Not altogether, madam, anſwered
'he; —— I had long before ſeen it was
'not in my power to inſpire that lady
'with any ſentiments of the kind, that
'would make me happy in a married
'ſtate. —— I loved her, but my reaſon
'combated with my paſſion, and got the
'better.'

'I underſtand you, ſir, replied ſhe,
'and though I hope, nay believe in my
'ſoul, that poor Miſs Betſy is innocent
'as a veſtal, yet I cannot but own, that

'the

'the too great gaiety of her temper, and 'the pride of attracting as many admirers 'as to have eyes to behold her, hurries her 'into errors, which, if perſevered in, can-'not but be fatal, both to the peace and 'reputation of a huſband; ——— where 'you now are fixed you doubtleſs have a 'much better proſpect of being truly 'happy. — It is, however, a great pity, 'methinks, continued this amiable lady, 'that ſo many rare and excellent qua-'lities, as Miſs Betſy is poſſeſſed of, 'ſhould all be ſwallowed up and loſt in 'the nonſenſical vanity of being too ge-'nerally admired.

They had time for no more, — Sir Ba-zil returned; — he had only been ſent for to examine the foul copy of the marriage articles, which the old gentleman had juſt brought from his lawyers, on purpoſe to ſhew it to him ſome time that day, and they now took their leave, that the lady might have time to dreſs; — Sir Bazil looking on his watch, ſaid, it was then a quarter paſt two, and they ſhould dine at three, ſo begged ſhe would not waſte 'too much time in conſulting her glaſs; 'For, added he, you know you have 'always charms for me.' — 'And I am 'not aſhamed then, replied ſhe, with a 'ſmile, even before Mr. Trueworth, to

'confeſs, that I deſire to have none for 'any other.'

He kiſſed her hand on this obliging ſpeech, and ran haſtily down ſtairs, followed by Mr. Trueworth, whoſe temper had not yet quite recovered its accuſtomed vivacity.

CHAP. XIII.

Seems to promiſe a very great change for the better, both in the humour and conduct of Miſs Betſy, in regard to thoſe who profeſſed themſelves her lovers.

AS little as Miſs Betſy had accuſtomed herſelf to compare and judge of things, ſhe wanted not the power, whenever it pleaſed her to have the will to do ſo:— the words of Sir Frederick Fineer, on taking leave of her at his laſt viſit, ſunk pretty deeply into her mind, nor could ſhe remember them without a mixture of ſurprize, reſentment, and confuſion. ——No man, excepting Mr. Saving, whoſe reaſons for it ſhe could not but allow were juſtifiable, had hitherto ever preſumed

preſumed to make his addreſſes to her in a clandeſtine manner, and Sir Frederick Fineer ſeemed to her, of all men, to have the leaſt excuſe for doing ſo, and ſhe would not have heſitated one moment to come into her brother Frank's opinion, that he was no other than an impoſtor, if the dependance ſhe had on the good faith of Mrs. Modely had not prevented her from entertaining ſuch a belief.

Beſides, all the pleaſure her gay young heart as yet had ever been capable of taking in the conqueſts ſhe had made, conſiſted in their being known, and this proceeding in Sir Frederick was too mortifying to that darling propenſity, to be eaſily forgiven, even though he ſhould make it appear, that the motives on which he requeſted this ſecrecy was ſuch as could not be diſpenſed with.

'What can the man mean? ſaid ſhe: '— I ſuppoſe, by his deſiring his court-'ſhip to me ſhould be a ſecret, he intends 'a marriage with me ſhould be ſo too; '— that I ſhould live with him only 'as the ſlave of his looſe pleaſures; and, 'though a lawful wife, paſs me in the 'eyes of the world for a kept miſtreſs. '— Was ever ſuch inſolence! —— 'ſuch an unparalelled inſult, both on my

'perſon and underſtanding! — Heaven 'be my witneſs, that it is only his qua-'lity could induce me; nay, I know not 'as yet whether even that could be 'ſufficient to induce me to become his 'wife, and can he be ſo ridiculouſly vain 'as to imagine I would accept him on 'any cheaper terms, than that eclat his 'rank and fortune would beſtow upon 'me?'

She ſpent all that part of the night which ſhe could ſpare from ſleep, in meditating on this affair, and at laſt came to a reſolution of ſeeing him no more, whatever he might pretend in juſtification of his late requeſt.

She alſo had it in her head to return unopened any letter he ſhould ſend; but curioſity prevailed above her reſentment in this point, and when his ſervant came in the morning, and preſented her with his maſter's compliments; and a billet at the ſame time, ſhe had not the power of denying herſelf the ſatisfaction of ſeeing what excuſe he would make: — the contents of it were as follows:

To the delight of my eyes, the life of my deſires, the only hope and joy of my adoring ſoul, the divine

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'Bright ſtar of England,

'SINCE laſt I left your radiant 'preſence, my mind has been all dark 'and gloomy, — my anxieties are un- 'utterable, — intollerable; — I know not 'what cruel conſtructions you may put 'upon the petition I made you, of not 'mentioning me to your brothers; — 'but ſure you cannot think I apprehend 'a refuſal from that quarter: — no, — 'my birth and fortune ſet me above all 'doubts of that nature, and I am very 'certain, that both they and all your 'kindred, would rather force you, if in 'their power, to accept the hand I offer, 'but it is not to them, but to yourſelf 'alone I can ſubmit to yield.—Heaven, 'tis true, is in poſſeſſing you, but then 'I would owe that heaven only to your 'love; — you may think, perhaps, that 'this is too great a delicacy, but know, 'fair angel, that there is another motive, '—a motive, which, though derived from 'the ſame ſource, binds me in a different 'way. — Fain would I court you, --- fain 'marry you with all the pomp and ſplen-

'dor

'dor your ſuperior beauty merits; but 'neither my virtue, my honour, nor my 'religion will permit it: — the myſtery is 'this:

'Upon examining into the cauſe, why 'we ſee ſo many jarring pairs united in 'the ſacred yoke of matrimony, I found 'it wholly owing to the want of that true 'affection, which, to make perfect hap-'pineſs, ought to precede the nuptial ce-'remony, — that ſordid intereſt, — the 'perſwaſion of friends, or ſome ſuch ſelfiſh 'view, either on the one ſide or the other, 'had given the hand without the heart, 'and inclination had no ſhare in beckon-'ing to the altar.

'Being convinced of this truth by in-'numerable examples, and reſolved to 'avoid the fate of others, I made a vow, 'and bound myſelf by the moſt ſolemn 'imprecations, never to marry any wo-'man, how dear ſoever ſhe might be to 'me, that would not aſſure me of her 'love, by flying privately with me to the 'altar, without conſulting friends, or 'aſking any advice, but of her own ſoft 'deſires.

'This, my adorable charmer, being 'the caſe, I am certain you have too

'high

'high a ſenſe of the duty owing to all 'that's holy, to exact from me a thing 'which you cannot but be certain, muſt 'entail eternal perdition on my perjured 'ſoul.

'Let us haſte then to tie the bliſsful 'knot, and ſurpriſe our friends with a 'marriage they little dreamed of. — As 'Phœbus each night hurries himſelf into 'the lap of Thetis, to render his appear-'ance the more welcome the next day, ſo 'ſhall the next morning after our mar-'riage, behold us ſhine forth at once no 'leſs gorgeous than the bright ruler of 'the day, dazzling the eyes of the ad-'miring world.

'I am fired with the imagination, and 'am wrapped in extacies unutterable, — 'but will fly this evening to your divine 'feet, where I hope to perſuade you to 'delay our mutual happineſs no longer 'than to-morrow, and exchange my pre-'ſent appellation of lover into that of huſ-'band, aſſuring yourſelf I ſhall then be, 'as now, with the moſt conſummate de-'votion to your all-conquering charms.

'Sweet goddeſs of my hopes,

'Your paſſionate adorer,

'And everlaſting ſlave,

F. FINEER.'

'P.S.

'P. S. I beſeech you will give neceſſary 'orders for preventing any impertinent 'intruder from breaking in upon our 'converſe, for, excluſive of my vow, 'I ſhould deteſt, as the poet ſays,

"With noiſe and ſhew, and in a crowd to woo,
"For true felicity dwells but in two.

'Once more, my dear divinity,—adieu.'

Miſs Betſy read this letter over ſeveral times, and made herſelf miſtreſs of the ſenſe, as ſhe thought, of every part of it; — ſhe had always found, in every thing he ſaid or did, a great deal of the affected and conceited coxcomb; but in this, ſhe imagined he diſcovered more of the deſigning knave: — the vow he mentioned was an excuſe too ſhallow to paſs on a diſcernment ſuch as her's; but her vanity ſtill ſuggeſting, that he was really in love with her, and that if he intended any villainy towards her, it was enforced by the violence of his paſſion, it came into her head, that there was a poſſibility of his being already married, or contracted, to ſome lady, whom he durſt not break with, but being bent on gaining her at all events, he had formed this pretence of a

vow

vow, in order to gain her to a clandeſtine marriage, thinking, that after it was over, and there was no remedy, ſhe would be content to live with him in a private manner, ſince it would then be impracticable for her to do ſo in a public one.

This indeed ſhe could not be certain of, but ſhe was ſo, that it did not become a woman of any family and character to receive the addreſſes of a man, how ſuperior ſoever he might be in point of fortune, who either was aſhamed, or had any other reaſons to hinder him from avowing his paſſion to her relations.

She reſolved therefore to put an end at once to a courtſhip, which, however high her expectations at firſt had been, ſhe now ſaw no probability would afford her either honour or ſatisfaction.

She had no ſooner fixed herſelf in this determination, than ſhe went to her cabinet, with an intent to pack up all the letters ſhe had received from him, and incloſe them in one to Mrs. Modely; but recollecting, ſhe had given one of them to her brother Frank, which he had not yet returned, ſhe thought ſhe would defer, 'till another opportunity, this teſtimony

mony of the diſregard ſhe had for himſelf, and all that came from him.

To prevent, however, his troubling her with any more viſits, meſſages, or epiſtles, ſhe ſat down to her eſcrutore, and immediately wrote her preſent ſentiments to his agent, in the following terms:

'To Mrs. MODELY.

'Dear Modely,

'AS it is not my cuſtom to write 'to men, except on buſineſs, of which 'I never reckoned love, nor the profeſſions of it, any part, I deſire you will tell 'Sir Frederick Fineer, that the only way 'for him to keep his oath inviolated, is 'to ceaſe entirely all farther proſecution 'of his addreſſes to me; for as my birth 'and fortune, as well as my humour, 'ſet me above encouraging a ſecret correſpondence with any man, on what pretence ſoever it may be requeſted, he 'may expect, nay aſſure himſelf, that on 'the next viſit he attempts to make me, 'or letter or meſſage he cauſes to be left 'for me, I ſhall directly acquaint my brothers with the whole ſtory of his courtſhip; the novelty of which may poſſibly 'afford us ſome diverſion.

'I

'I thank you for the good I believe you 'intended me, in your recommendation of 'a lover, whoſe title and eſtate you might 'think had ſome charms in them, and the 'oddities of whoſe temper you were per-'haps unacquainted with.

'I deſire, however, you will henceforward make no 'mention of him, but, 'whenever I ſend for you, confine your 'converſation to ſuch matters as befits 'your vocation, for as to others I find 'you are but little ſkilled in what will 'pleaſe her, who is,

'Notwithſtanding this raillery,

'My dear Modely,

'Yor friend and ſervant,

'B. THOUGHTLESS.

P.S. To ſhew how much I am in earneſt, 'I ſhould have ſent the baronet all the 'epiſtles he has been at the pains of 'writing to me, but I am juſt going 'out, and I have not leiſure to look 'them up; — I will not fail, however, 'to let him have them in a day or 'two: — they may ſerve any other 'woman as well as me, and ſave him 'abundance of trouble in his next 'courtſhip. — You ſee I have ſome

'good-

'good-nature, tho' nothing of that love 'I ſuppoſe he imagined his merits had 'inſpired me with.—Adieu.

Miſs Betſy was highly diverted, after ſending this diſpatch, to think how ſilly poor Modely would look, on finding herſelf obliged to deliver ſuch a meſſage to her grand lodger, and how diſmally mortified he would be on the receiving it.

CHAP. XIV.

Shews that Miſs Betſy, whenever ſhe pleaſed to exert herſelf, had it in her power to be diſcreet, even on occaſions the moſt tempting to her honour and inclination.

SOON after Miſs Betſy had ſent away what ſhe thought would be a final anſwer to Sir Frederick, her brother Frank came in; — ſhe immediately ſhewed him the letter ſhe had received that morning, and related to him in what manner ſhe had behaved concerning it, with which he was extremely pleaſed, and ſaid more tender things to her, than any ſhe had heard from him ſince he came to town.

'This

'This is a way of acting, my dear ſiſter, 'ſaid he, which, if you perſevere in, will 'infallibly gain you the eſteem of all who 'know you; for while you encourage 'the addreſſes of every idle fop, believe 'me, you will render yourſelf cheap, and 'loſe all your merit with the ſenſible part 'of mankind.'

If ſhe was not quite of his opinion in this point, ſhe offered no arguments in oppoſition to the remarks he had made, and aſſured him, as ſhe had done once before, that ſhe would never give any man the leaſt grounds to hope ſhe approved his pretenſions, 'till ſhe had firſt received the ſanction of both his and her brother Thoughtleſs's approbation.

He then told her, that they had received intelligence, that the India ſhip, which they heard was to bring Mr. Edward Goodman, was ſafely arrived in the Downs; ſo that, in all likelihood, that gentleman would be in London in two or three days at fartheſt;—'which I am 'very glad of,' ſaid he; 'for, though I 'believe the lawyer a very honeſt, dili-'gent man as any can be of his profeſſion, 'the preſence of the heir will give a life

'to

'to the cauſe, and may bring things to a 'more ſpeedy iſſue.

He alſo told her, that a gentleman of her brother's acquaintance had the day before received a letter from Sir Ralph Truſty, intimating, that he ſhould be obliged, by the death of Mr. Goodman, there being affairs of conſequence between them, to come to town much ſooner than he had intended, and that he ſhould bring his lady with him: — 'And then, 'my dear ſiſter,' ſaid he, 'you will be 'happy for a time at leaſt, in the con-'verſation and advice of one, who, I am 'certain, in her good wiſhes for you, de-'ſerves to be looked upon by you, as a 'ſecond mother.'

He was going on in ſome farther commendations of that worthy lady, when Miſs Betſy's man came to the dining-room door, and told her, that Mr. Munden was below in the parlour, and would wait on her if ſhe was at leiſure. — Mr. Francis perceiving ſhe was heſitating what anſwer to make, cried haſtily, 'Pray 'ſiſter admit him; —— this is lucky, 'now I ſhall ſee how much he excels Mr. 'Trueworth in perſon and parts.' — 'I 'never told you,' anſwered ſhe, 'that he 'did ſo in either; but perhaps he may

'in

'in his good opinion and eſteem for me;
'— however, I think you promiſed never
'to mention Trueworth again to me; ;—
'I wiſh you would keep your word.' —
'Well. — I have done,' ſaid he, 'do
'not keep the gentleman waiting.' — On which ſhe bade the footman deſire Mr. Munden to walk up.

That gentleman was a good deal diſconcerted in his mind, concerning the little progreſs his courtſhip had made with Miſs Betſy; — he had followed her for a conſiderable time, — been at a great expence in treating and making preſents to her;— he had ſtudied her humour, and done every thing in his power to pleaſe her, yet thought himſelf as far from the completion of his wiſhes, as when he began his addreſſes to her; — he had not for ſeveral days had an opportunity of ſpeaking one word to her in private? — ſhe was either abroad when he came, or ſo engaged in company, that his preſence ſerved only to fill a vacant ſeat in her dining-room; — he therefore determined to know what fate he was to expect from her.

As he had not been told any body was now with her, and had never ſeen Mr. Francis before, he was a little ſtartled on his coming into the room, to find a young,

gay

gay gentleman ſeated very near her, and lolling his arm, in a careleſs poſture, over the back of the chair in which ſhe was ſitting;—on his entrance, they both roſe to receive him with a great deal of politeneſs, which he returned in the ſame manner, but added to the firſt compliments, that he hoped he had been guilty of no intruſion.

'Not at all, ſir,' replied the brother of 'Miſs Betſy, 'I was only talking to my 'ſiſter on ſome family affairs, which we 'may reſume at any time, when no more 'agreeable ſubjects of entertainment fall 'in our way.' — Yes, Mr. Munden,' 'ſaid Miſs Betſy, 'this is that brother, 'whoſe return to town you ſo often heard 'me wiſh for: — and this, brother,' con-'tinued ſhe, turning to Mr. Francis, is a 'gentleman who ſometimes does me the ho-'nour of calling upon me, and whoſe viſits 'to me I believe you will not diſapprove.'

She had no ſooner ended theſe words, than the two gentlemen mutually advanced, embraced, and ſaid they ſhould be proud of each other's acquaintance; after which they entered into a converſation ſprightly enough for the time it laſted, which was not long; for Mr. Francis looking on his watch, ſaid, he was extremely mortified to leave ſuch good company, but buſineſs of

a very urgent nature called him to a different place at that hour.

As much as Mr. Munden was pleaſed to find himſelf ſo obligingly introduced by his miſtreſs, to the acquaintance of her brother, he was equally glad to be rid of him at this juncture, when he came prepared to preſs her ſo home to an eclairciſement, as ſhould deprive her of all poſſibility of keeping himſelf any longer in ſuſpence.

It was in vain for her now to have recourſe to any of thoſe evaſions by which ſhe had hitherto put him off, and ſhe found herſelf under a neceſſity either of entirely diſcarding him, or giving him ſome kind of aſſurance, that the continuance of his pretenſions would not be in vain.

Never had ſhe been ſo plunged before, — never had any of her lovers inſiſted in ſuch plain terms on her declaring herſelf, and ſhe was compelled, as it were, to tell him, ſince he was ſo impatient for the definition of his fate, it was from her brothers he muſt receive it, for ſhe was reſolved, nay had ſolemnly promiſed, to enter into no engagement without their knowledge and approbation. — 'But, ſup-

'poſe,' ſaid he, 'I ſhould be ſo happy 'as to obtain their conſent, may I then 'aſſure myſelf you will be mine?'——— 'Would you wiſh me to hate you,' cried ſhe, ſomewhat peeviſhly? — 'Hate me!' anſwered he; — 'no, Madam, it is your 'love I would purchaſe, almoſt at the 'expence of life.'

'Perſecute me then no more,' ſaid ſhe, 'to give you promiſe, or aſſurances, 'which would only make me ſee you 'with confuſion, and think of you with 'regret; — it is ſufficient I eſteem you, 'and liſten to the profeſſions of your love, '— let that content you, and leave to 'myſelf the grant of more.' — 'Yet, 'madam,' reſumed he, — and was going on, but was interrupted by the maid, who come haſtily into the room, and ſaid, 'Madam, here is Miſs Mabel.

She had no ſooner ſpoke theſe words, than the lady ſhe mentioned followed her into the room. — Miſs Betſy was never more glad to ſee her than now, when her preſence afforded her ſo ſeaſonable a relief: — 'My dear Miſs Mabel,' ſaid ſhe, 'this is kind indeed, when I already owe 'you two viſits., — 'I believe you owe 'me more,' anſwered ſhe, with a ſmile; 'but I did not come to reproach you, — 'nor

'nor can this indeed be juſtly called a 'viſit, ſince it is only a mere matter of 'buſineſs brings me hither at this time.'

Mr. Munden on this thought proper to take his leave, but, in doing ſo, ſaid to Miſs Betſy, with a very grave air, — 'I hope, Madam, you will have the good-'neſs to conſider ſeriouſly on what we 'have been talking of: — I will do my 'ſelf the honour to wait upon your bro-'thers to-morrow, and afterwards on 'yourſelf.' — With theſe words he with-drew without ſtaying for an anſwer.

'I know not, ſaid Miſs Mabel, after he was gone, 'whether what I have to 'ſay to you will be of ſufficient moment 'to excuſe me for depriving you of your 'company, — ſince I only called to tell 'you, that we are eaſed of our little pen-'ſioner at Denham, by the father's un-'expectedly coming to claim his own.'

Miſs Betſy replied, that ſhe gueſſed as much, for ſhe had heard thoſe people had been at her lodgings, when ſhe was not at home, and had ſaid ſomewhat of their buſineſs to her ſervant. — 'I am alſo to 'pay you,' reſumed the other, 'my quota 'of the laſt months nurſing.' — In ſpeak-ing theſe words ſhe took out of her pocket

the little ſum ſhe ſtood indebted for, and laid it on the table.

Though Miſs Betſy had the moſt perfect regard and good wiſhes for Miſs Mabel, and Miſs Mabel the ſame for Miſs Betſy, yet neither of them was in the ſecrets of the other: — they viſited but ſeldom, and when they did, talked only on indifferent affairs. — In fine, though they both loved the amiable qualities each found in the other, yet the wide contrariety between their diſpoſitions, occaſioned a cooleneſs in their behaviour, which their hearts were far from feeling.

Miſs Mabel ſtayed but a very few minutes, after having diſpatched the buſineſs ſhe came upon, nor was Miſs Betſy at all troubled at her departure, being at preſent, what ſhe very rarely was, in a humour rather to be alone than in any company whatever.

She no ſooner was at liberty than ſhe began to reflect on the tranſactions of that morning; — ſhe had done two things, which ſeemed pretty extraordinary to her; — ſhe had entirely diſmiſſed one lover, a piece of reſolution ſhe did not a little value herſelf upon, but then ſhe was vexed

at

at the too great encouragement, as ſhe thought it, which ſhe had given to another.

'What ſhall I do with this Munden?' ſaid ſhe to herſelf. — 'If my brothers 'ſhould take it into their heads to ap- 'prove of his pretenſions, I ſhall be as 'much teized on his account, as I was 'on that of Mr. Trueworth's: — I have 'no averſion indeed to the man, but I 'am equally as far from having any love 'for him; — there is nothing in his per- 'ſon, or behaviour, that might make a 'woman aſhamed of being his wife, yet 'I can ſee nothing ſo extraordinary in 'him, as to induce me to become ſo.'

'Why then,' continued ſhe, 'did I 'not tell him at once I would not have 'him, and that if he was weary of pay- 'ing his reſpects to me, he might carry 'them where they would be more kindly 'received? — It was a very ſilly thing 'in me to ſend him to my brothers; — 'they are in ſuch haſte to get me out of 'the way of what they call temptation, 'that I believe they would marry me to 'any man, that was of a good family 'and had an eſtate. — If I muſt needs 'have a huſband to pleaſe them, I had 'better have taken Trueworth, — I am ſure there is no compariſon between the

'men; but it is too late to think of that 'now, for it is very plain, both by his 'behaviour to me when laſt I ſaw him, 'and by what he ſaid to my brother 'Frank, that he has given over all in-'tentions on that ſcore.'

She was in the midſt of theſe cogitations, when a ſervant belonging to the ladies whom ſhe viſited at St. James's, came, and preſented her with a letter, containing theſe lines:

To Miss Betsy Thoughtless.

'Dear Creature,

'MY ſiſter and ſelf had an invitation 'to a party of pleaſure, where there 'will be the beſt company, — the beſt 'muſick, and the beſt entertainment in 'the world; but my father having un-'luckily forced her to paſs ſome days 'with an old aunt, who lies dangerouſly 'ſick at Hampſtead, I know nobody can 'ſo well ſupply her vacant place, as your 'agreeable ſelf; — therefore, if you are 'not already too deeply engaged this 'evening, would beg the favour of you 'to ſhare with me in the propoſed diver-'ſion: — we ſhall have two young gen-'tlemen of rank for our conductors and 'protectors; — but I flatter myſelf you

'will

'will make no ſcruple to go any where 'with her, who is,

'With the moſt perfect amity

'Dear Miſs Betſy,

'Your moſt humble,

'And moſt obedient ſervant,

'A. AIRISH.

P. S. Let me know whether I can be 'ſo happy as to have you with me, 'and if ſo, I will call on you about 'five, and drink tea, for we ſhall not 'go to the aſſembly 'till eight.'

This propoſal put Miſs Betſy out of all her ſerious reflections, and ſhe returned for anſwer to the lady, that ſhe would not fail to be at home, and ready to attend her at the appointed hour.

Accordingly, as ſoon as ever dinner was over, ſhe went to dreſs, and thought of nothing but how to make as brilliant a figure as any ſhe ſhould meet with at the aſſembly. —— Miſs Airiſh came ſomewhat before the hour ſhe had mentioned in her letter, accompanied by two rakes of quality, whom Miſs Betſy had ſeen two or

three times before with her and her ſiſter, and by one of whom ſhe had once been treated with ſome familiarities, which had made her ever ſince very cautious of giving him any opportunity to attempt the like.

As much, therefore, as ſhe had pleaſed herſelf with the idea of this evening's pleaſures, ſhe no ſooner ſaw who were to be their conductors, that ſhe reſolved not to put herſelf into their powers, yet knew not how without affronting Miſs Airiſh, to avoid complying with the promiſes ſhe had made of accompanying her.

They all came ſinging and romping into the room, but the perplexity of Miſs Betſy's mind made her receive them with a very ſerious air: — the men accoſted her with a freedom conformable enough to their own characters, but not very agreeable to one of her's, and ſhe rebuffed with a good deal of contempt him, with whom ſhe had moſt reaſon to be offended.

'Lord! how grave you look,' ſaid Miſs Airiſh, obſerving her countenance; 'prithee, my dear creature, put on a 'more chearful aſpect: — this is to be a 'night of all ſpirit, — all mirth, — all 'gaiety.'—'I am ſorry I cannot be a par-

'taker

'taker of it,' ſaid Miſs Betſy, who, by this time, had contrived an excuſe. —— 'Lord! what do you mean? — not partake of it!' cried Miſs Airiſh, haſtily; '— ſure you would not offer to diſappoint us?' —— Not willingly,' replied Miſs Betſy; 'but I was juſt going to 'ſend to let you know, I have received 'a meſſage from my elder brother, to 'come to his houſe, in order to meet 'ſome perſons there, on very extraordi-'nary buſineſs; — but, I hope,' added ſhe, 'that my not going will be no hin-'drance to the diverſion you propoſe.'

'It would have been none, madam,' ſaid one of the gallants, 'if this aſſembly 'were like others; but we are only a ſe-'lect company of gay young fellows, 'who reſolve to try how far nature may 'be exhilerated by regaling every ſenſe 'at once:—to prevent all quarrels, every 'man is to bring a lady with him, who 'is to be his partner in ſinging, — danc-'ing, — playing, — or whatever they 'two ſhall agree upon.—We two,' continued he, 'pitched upon the two Miſs 'Airiſhes, but one of them being gone 'another way, we thought of you, other-'wiſe we could have found ladies who 'would have obliged us.'

'Very likely,' replied Miſs Betſy, 'and 'I ſuppoſe it may not yet be too late to 'ſeek them.' — 'But I had rather have 'you than all the world,' cried he, that Miſs Betſy was moſt apprehenſive of, 'you know I have always ſhewn a par-'ticular tendre for you; — therefore pri-'thee,' continued he, catching her in his arms, and eagerly kiſſing her, 'my dear 'girl, ſend ſome excuſe to your brother, 'and let us have you with us.'

'Unhand me, my Lord,' cried ſhe, ſtruggling to get looſe; — 'what you 'aſk is impoſſible, for I neither can nor 'will go.' — The reſolution with which ſhe ſpoke theſe words, and the anger which at the ſame time ſparkled in her eyes, made them ſee it would be but loſt labour to endeavour to perſuade her; — they looked one at another, and were confounded what to do, 'till Miſs Airiſh, vexed to the very heart at Miſs Betſy's behaviour, hit upon an expedient to ſolve up the matter:—'Well,' ſaid ſhe, 'ſince 'Miſs Betſy cannot go, I will introduce 'your lordſhip to a young lady, who, I 'am ſure, will not refuſe us; — beſides, 'I know ſhe is at home, for I ſaw her 'looking out of her chamber window as 'we

'we came by;—but we muſt go directly,
'that ſhe may have time to dreſs.'

On this, they both cried with all their hearts, and one of them taking her hand ſkipped down ſtairs with her, in the ſame wild way they came up: — the other followed, only turning his head towards Miſs Betſy, cried, with a malicious ſneer,

"How unregarded now that piece of beauty
ſtands!"

Miſs Betſy, though ſufficiently piqued, was very glad to get rid of them, and the more ſo, that by their happening to call on her, inſtead of her meeting them at Miſs Airiſh's apartment, ſhe had the better opportunity of excuſing herſelf from going where they deſired.

CHAP. XV.

The terrible conſequence, which may poſſibly attend our placing too great a dependance on perſons whoſe principles we are not well aſſured of, are here exemplified, in a notable act of villainy and hypocriſy.

MISS Betſy no ſooner found herſelf alone, than ſhe began to reflect very ſeriouſly on the preceeding paſſage: —ſhe knew very little of theſe two young noblemen, yet thought ſhe ſaw enough in their behaviour to make any woman, who had the leaſt regard for her honour or reputation, fearful to truſt herſelf with them in any place, where both might be ſo much endangered; — ſhe was, therefore, very much amazed, that Miſs Airiſh ſhould run ſo great a riſque, and to find that ſhe did ſo, joined to ſome other things, which ſhe had of late obſerved in the conduct of both the ſiſters, contributed to diminiſh the love and eſteem ſhe once had for them,

She

She found, however, too many objects of ſatisfaction in the viſits ſhe made to thoſe ladies, to be willing to break acquaintance with them, and as ſhe doubted not but that ſhe had highly diſobliged the one, by not complying with her invitation, and that this would infallibly occaſion a rupture with the other alſo, if not in time reconciled, ſhe went the next morning to their apartment, in order to make her peace.

On her enquiring for that lady, the footman told her, ſhe was but juſt come home, and he believed was going to bed, but he would tell the chamber-maid ſhe was there. — 'No, — no,' cried Miſs Betſy, 'only give my compliments to your lady, 'and tell her, I will wait on her in the 'afternoon.' — She was going away with theſe words, but Miſs Airiſh, lying on the ſame floor, heard her voice, and called to her to come in.

Miſs Betſy did as ſhe was deſired, and found her in a much better humour than ſhe expected. — 'O, my dear,' ſaid ſhe, 'what a night have you loſt by not being 'with us! — Such a promiſcuous enjoy-'ment of every thing that can afford de-'light or ſatisfaction! — Well, after all,

'there

'there is nothing like playing the rake a 'little ſometimes,—it gives ſuch a fillup to 'the ſpirits.'

'Provided it be innocent, I am of your 'mind,' replied Miſs Betſy; —'I ſup- 'poſe every thing was managed with de- 'cency among you.'—'O quite ſo,' cried the other; —'all harmleſs libertiniſm:— 'tis true, there were were private rooms; 'but you know one might chuſe whether 'one would go into them or not.' —'I 'am ſure of that,' ſaid Miſs Betſy: —'I 'am glad, however, you were ſo well 'pleaſed with your entertainment, and 'equally ſo, that you were not hindered 'from enjoying it, by my not being able 'to ſhare with you in it.'

'I am obliged to you, my dear,' replied Miſs Airiſh,—'I was a little vexed 'with you at firſt, indeed, but knew you 'could not help it;—the lady we called 'upon went very readily with us, ſo as it 'happened there was no diſappointment 'in the caſe.

'It was only to be convinced of that,' ſaid Miſs Betſy, 'that I came hither thus 'early; but I will now take my leave, '—repoſe I am ſure is neceſſary for you, 'after ſo many waking hours.' — The

'other

other did not oppoſe her departure, being in effect deſirous of taking that reſt, which her exhauſted ſpirits wanted.

Never had Miſs Betſy felt within herſelf a greater or more ſincere ſatisfaction than ſhe now did, for having ſo prudently avoided falling into inconveniencies, the leaſt of which, as ſhe very rightly judged, would have been paying too dear a price for all the pleaſures ſhe could have received.

Sweet indeed are the reflections which flow from a conſciouſneſs of having done what virtue, and the duty owing to the character we bear in life exact from us, but poor Miſs Betſy was not to enjoy, for any long time, ſo happy a tranquility ; — ſhe was rouſed out of this ſerenity of mind by an adventure of a different kind from all ſhe had ever yet experienced, and which, if ſhe were not properly guarded againſt, it ought to be imputed rather to the unſuſpecting goodneſs of her heart, than to her vanity, or that inadvertency, which had occaſioned her former miſtakes.

She was ſitting near the window, leaning her arm upon the ſlab, very deep in contemplation, when, hearing a coach ſtop

at the door, ſhe looked out, imagining it might be ſomebody to her, and ſaw Mrs. Modely come out;——ſhe wondered what buſineſs that woman ſhould now come upon, after the letter ſhe had ſent her, and reſolved to chide her for any impertinent meſſage ſhe ſhould deliver.

Mrs. Modely, whoſe profeſſion was known to the people of the houſe, always ran up without any other ceremony than aſking if Miſs Betſy was at home and alone: — being now told ſhe was ſo, ſhe flew into the room, with a diſtraction in her countenance which very much ſurpriſed Miſs Betſy; but before ſhe had time to aſk the meaning, the other throwing herſelf down in a chair, increaſed her aſtoniſhment by theſe words:

'O! madam,' cried ſhe, 'I am come 'to tell you of the ſaddeſt accident: — 'poor Sir Frederick Fineer!—O that he 'had never ſeen you!—O that I had never 'meddled between you!—I am undone, 'that is to be ſure,— ruined for ever:--- 'I ſhall never get another lodger,---nay, 'I believe, I ſhall never recover the fright 'I am in.'

Here ſhe burſt into a violent fit of tears, and her ſobs interrupting the paſſage of her

her words, gave Miſs Betſy opportunity to enquire into the myſtery of her behaviour: —— 'For heaven's ſake, what is 'the matter?' ſaid that young lady; 'prithee ceaſe theſe exclamations, and 'ſpeak to be underſtood!'

'Ah, dear Miſs Betſy,' reſumed the other, 'I ſcarce know what I ſay or do, '— poor Sir Frederick has run himſelf 'quite through the body.' — 'What! 'killed himſelf,' cried Miſs Betſy haſtily? — 'He is not dead yet,' replied Mrs. Modely; 'but there he lies the moſt diſ-'mal object that ever eyes beheld: — 'the agonies of death in his face, — the 'ſword ſticking in his breaſt; for the 'ſurgeon ſays, that the moment that is 'drawn out, his life comes with it.'

Perceiving Miſs Betſy ſaid nothing, and looked a little troubled, ſhe went on in this manner: — 'But this is not the worſt 'I have to tell you, Madam,' continued ſhe, — 'his death is nothing; but it is 'his ſoul, — his ſoul, Miſs Betſy: ----- 'hearing them ſay he could not live above 'three hours at moſt, I ſent for a parſon, '— and there the good man ſits and 'talks, and argues with him; —— but, 'would you think it, he will not pray, '— nor be prayed for, — nor confeſs his 'ſins,

'ſins, — nor ſay he is ſorry for what he 'has done, ---- nor do any thing that is 'right 'till he has ſeen you.'

'Me! ſaid Miſs Betſy, 'what would he 'ſee me for?' — 'Nay, I know not, ---- 'but it is his whim, and he is obſtinate,--- 'therefore, my dear Madam, in chriſtian 'charity, and in compaſſion to his ſoul, 'hear what he has to ſay.'

'What good can I do him by going, 'Mrs. Modely?' ſaid Miſs Betſy; ——— 'none, as to his ſhare in this world,' anſwered ſhe; --- 'but, dear Madam, con-'ſider the other, ---- think what a ſad 'thing it is for a man to die without the 'rites of the church; — I'll warrant he has 'ſins enough upon him, as moſt young 'gentlemen have, and ſure you would not 'be the cauſe of his being miſerable to all 'eternity!'

'Indeed, Mrs. Modely, I do not care 'to go,' ſaid Miſs Betſy. — 'The ſight 'is very terrible indeed,' cried the other, 'but you need not ſtay two minutes, — 'if you but juſt ſtep in and ſpeak to 'him, I fancy it will be enough; --- but 'lrd he may be dead while we are talk-'ing, and if he ſhould leave the world 'in this manner, I ſhould not be able to

'live

'live in my houſe, ---- and I have a leaſe 'of eleven years to come, ---- I ſhould 'think I ſaw his ghoſt in every room; '--- ſo dear, dear Miſs, Betſy, for my 'ſake, if not for his, go with me; ---- I 'came in a hackney-coach for haſte, and 'it is ſtill at the door'

'Well, Modely, you ſhall prevail, anſwered Miſs Betſy; 'but you ſhall ſtay 'in the room all the time I am there.' --- 'That you may be ſure I will.' returned the other; --- 'but come, --- pray heaven 'we are not too late.'

They ſaid little more to each other, 'till they came to the houſe of Mrs. Modely, where the firſt ſound that reached the ears of Miſs Betſey, were groans, which ſeemed to iſſue from the mouth of a perſon in the pangs of death.

Mrs. Modely led her into Sir Frederick's chamber, which was judiciouſly darkened, ſo as to leave light enough to diſcern objects, yet not ſo much as to render them too perſpicuous:—Miſs Betſy ſaw him lying on the bed, as Mrs. Modely deſcribed, with a ſword ſticking upright in his breaſt, —a clergyman, and another perſon, who appeared to be the ſurgeon, were ſitting near him.——'Miſs Betſy is

'ſo

'ſo good,' ſaid Mrs. Modely, 'to come 'to viſit you, Sir Frederick.' ——— 'I 'am glad of it,' replied he, with a low voice, '—pray, Madam, approach.'

'I am ſorry, Sir Frederick, to find you 'have been guilty of ſo raſh an action,' ſaid Miſs Betſy, drawing towards the bed. — 'I could not live without you,' rejoined, he, 'nor would die without leav-'ing you as happy as it is in my power 'to make you; — I have ſettled two 'thouſand pounds a year upon you, dur-'ing your natural life; — but as I would 'conſult your honour in every thing I 'do, and people might imagine I made 'you this ſettlement in conſideration of 'ſome favours, which I had too true a 'regard for you ever to deſire, you muſt 'enjoy it as my widow, and with it the 'title of lady Fineer.'

Miſs Betſy was ſo much amazed at this propoſal, that ſhe had not the power to ſpeak; but Mrs. Modely cried out, 'Was 'ever any thing ſo generous!' — 'Truly 'noble indeed,' added the ſurgeon, 'and 'worthy of himſelf, and the love he 'has for this lady.' —— 'Bleſs me!' ſaid Miſs Betſy, 'would you have me marry 'a dying man? — You ought, Sir Frede-

'rick,

'rick, to have other thoughts, as you are 'going out of the world.

'Aye, Sir Frederick,' cried the parſon, 'think of your immortal part.' ------ I 'can think of nothing,' anſwered he, groaning bitterly, 'of my own happineſs, 'till I have fixed that of Miſs Betty's.--- 'Lord, Madam,' cried Mrs. Modely, ſoftly, 'you would not be ſo mad to re-'fuſe: ---- what two thouſand pounds a 'year, and a ladyſhip with liberty to 'marry who you will?

'This is the moſt generous offer I 'ever heard of,' ſaid the parſon; 'but 'I wiſh the lady would reſolve ſoon, for 'it is high time Sir Frederick ſhould pre-'pare for another world.' ----- 'He can-'not live above an hour,' rejoined the ſurgeon, 'even the ſword is not with-'drawn; ——— therefore, good Madam, 'think what you have to do.'

While they were ſpeaking Sir Frede-rick redoubled his groans, and they went on preſſing her to accept the terms he offered. -- -- 'Do not plunge a man into 'a ſad eternity, merely for his love to 'you,' ſaid the parſon. ---- 'All the world 'would condemn you, ſhould you refuſe, cried the ſurgeon. ---- A virgin widow

'with

'with two thouſand pounds a year,' added Mrs. Modely.

In this manner did they urge her, and the parſon getting on the one ſide of her, and the ſurgeon on the other, plied her ſo cloſe with arguments, both on the advantages accruing to herſelf, and the compaſſion owing from her to a gentleman, who had committed this act of deſperation on himſelf, merely through his love of her, that ſhe neither could, nor knew how to make any anſwer, when Sir Frederick giving two or three great groans, which ſeemed more deep than before, and the ſurgeon pretending to take Miſs Betſy's ſilence for conſent, cried out, 'Madam, 'he is juſt going, — we muſt be ſpeedy.' And then turning to the parſon, 'Doctor,' ſaid he, 'proceed to the ceremony, ---- 'paſs over the prelude, and begin at the 'moſt eſſential part, elſe my patient won't 'live to the concluſion.'

The parſon knew very well what he had to do, having his book ready, began at — 'Sir Frederick Fineer, Baronet, wilt 'thou have this woman to be thy wedded 'wife?' — and ſo on. — To which Sir Frederick anſwered, in the ſame diſmal accents he had hitherto ſpoken, 'I will.' —Then the parſon turning to Miſs Betſy, ſaid,

ſaid, 'Betſy Thoughtleſs, wilt thou have 'this man to be thy wedded huſband?' — and ſo forth. — Miſs Betſy in the confuſion of her mind, not well knowing what ſhe ſaid, or did, replied in the affirmative, on which he was hurrying over the reſt of the ceremony, but ſhe recollecting herſelf, cried out, — 'Hold, 'doctor, I cannot be married in this 'manner.' — But he ſeemed not to regard her words, but read on, and the ſurgeon taking hold of her hand, and joining it with Sir Frederick's held it in ſpite of her reſiſtance, 'till the ring was forced upon her finger.

This action ſo incenſed her, that the inſtant ſhe got her hand at liberty, ſhe plucked off the ring, and threw it on the ground: — 'What do you mean,' ſaid ſhe? — 'Do you think to compel me to 'a marriage? — Modely, you have not 'uſed me well.' — With theſe words ſhe was turning to go out of the room, but perceived, not 'till then, that Mrs. Modely had ſlipped out, and that the door was locked; — ſhe then began to call, 'Mrs. 'Modely, — Mrs. Modely:' to which no anſwer was made.

'Come, come, Madam,' ſaid the ſurgeon, 'this paſſion will avail you nothing; '— you

'— you are effectually married, what-
'ever you may imagine to the contrary.'
'Yes, yes,' rejoined the parſon, 'the
'ceremony is good and firm: ----- I will
'ſtand to what I have done before any
'Biſhop in England.' ----- 'There wants
'only conſummation,' cried the ſurgeon,
7 'and that we muſt leave the bridegroom
'to compleat before he dies.' ----- With
theſe words they both went out, making
the door faſt after them.

Miſs Betſy made uſe of her utmoſt efforts to paſs at the ſame time they did, but they puſhed her back with ſo much violence, as almoſt threw her down, and Sir Frederick at the ſame time jumping off the bed, and throwing away the ſword, which ſhe imagined ſheathed in his body, catched her ſuddenly in his arms.

'Tis hard to ſay, whether rage for the impoſition ſhe now found had been practiſed on her, or the terror for the danger ſhe was in, was the paſſion now moſt predominant in the ſoul of Miſs Betſy; but both together ſerved to inſpire her with unuſual ſtrength and courage.

'Your reſiſtance is in vain,' cried he,
'you are my life, and as ſuch I ſhall
'enjoy you: — no matter whether with
'your

'your will or not.' — She made no anſwer to theſe words; but collecting all her force, ſprung from him, and catching hold of one of the poſts at the bed's foot, clung ſo faſt round it, that all his endeavours to remove her thence were ineffectual for ſome moments, though the rough means he made uſe of for that purpoſe, were very near breaking both her arms.

Breathleſs at laſt, however, with the continual ſhrieks ſhe had ſent out for help, and the violence ſhe had ſuſtained by the efforts of that abandoned wretch, who had as little regard to the tenderneſs of her ſex, as to any other principle of humanity, ſhe fell almoſt fainting on the floor, and was on the point of becoming a victim to the moſt wicked ſtratagem that ever was invented, when on a ſudden the door of the chamber was burſt open, and a man with his ſword drawn, at that inſtant ruſhed in upon them.

'Monſter! cried he that entered, what 'act of villainy are you about to per-'petrate?' — Miſs Betſy riſing from the 'ground at the ſame time, ſaid to him, '— Oh! whoever you are, that Heaven 'has ſent to my deliverance, ſave me, I 'conjure you, from that horrid wretch.'

'—Fear nothing, madam,' anſwered he. He had time for no more; the intended raviſher had ſnatched up his ſword, and was advancing towards him with theſe words, 'That woman is my wife,' ſaid he; 'how dare any one interfere between 'us?'—'O, 'tis falſe;—'tis falſe! believe 'him not,' cried Miſs Betſy. — Her protector made no reply, but flying at his antagoniſt, immediately cloſed with him, and wrenched the ſword out of his hand, which throwing on the ground, he ſet his foot upon, and ſnapped it in pieces.

The obſcurity of the room, joined to the exceſſive agitations Miſs Betſy was in, had 'till now hindered her from diſcovering, either by the voice or perſon, who it was to whom ſhe owed her ſafety; on his drawing back one of the window curtains to give more light into the place, that he might ſee with whom he had been engaged, ſhe preſently ſaw, to her great amazement and confuſion, that her deliverer was no other than Mr. Trueworth.

But how great ſoever was her aſtoniſhment, that of Mr. Trueworth was not leſs, when looking on the face of the pretended Sir Frederick Fineer, he preſently knew him to be a fellow, who had ſerved in quality of valet de chambre to a gentleman

tleman he was acquainted with in France, who had robbed his maſter, and only through his lenity and compaſſion had avoided the puniſhment his crimes deſerved.

'Raſcal, cried Mr. Trueworth, have 'you eſcaped breaking on the wheel at 'Paris, to attempt deeds more deſerving 'death in England!' — The wretch, who hitherto had behaved with a very lofty air, now finding he was diſcovered, fell at Mr. Trueworth's feet, and begged he would have mercy on him; — alledged, that what he had done was occaſioned by meer neceſſity; — ſaid, he was told the lady had a great fortune, and might be eaſily gained, and ſuch like ſtuff, which putting Mr. Trueworth beyond all patience, he gave him three or four blows with the flat of his ſword, before he ſheathed it, ſaying at the ſame time,— 'Execrable dog! — if thou wert not 'unworthy of death from any hand but 'that of the common hangman, thou 'ſhould not live a moment to boaſt the 'leaſt acquaintance with this lady.' — Then turning to Miſs Betſy, who was half dying with the various emotions ſhe was poſſeſſed of: — 'Madam, ſaid he, 'I will not aſk by what means you came 'into this villain's company, only per-

'mit me to conduct you hence, and ſee 'you ſafely home.'

Miſs Betſy was ſeized with ſo violent a fit of trembling through all her frame, that ſhe had neither voice to thank him, for the extraordinary aſſiſtance ſhe had received from him, nor ſtrength enough to bear her down ſtairs, if he had not with the greateſt politeneſs and moſt tender care, ſupported her at every ſtep ſhe took.

They found no creature below; the houſe ſeemed as if forſaken by all its inhabitants; but the parlour door being open, Mr. Trueworth placed his fair charge in an eaſy chair, while he ran to find ſomebody to get a coach.

After much knocking and calling, Mrs. Modely came out of a back room, into that where Miſs Betſy was. — As ſoon as that young lady ſaw her, — 'Oh, Mrs. 'Modely, cried ſhe, I could not have 'believed you would have betrayed me 'in this cruel manner.' ——'Bleſs me! 'madam, replied ſhe, in a confuſion, 'which ſhe in vain endeavoured to con-'ceal,—'I know not what you mean.— 'I betray you! — When you were talk-'ing with Sir Frederick I was ſent for out, '—when I came back, indeed, I ſaw the 'parſon

'parſon and ſurgeon paſs through the 'entry in a hurry, and at the ſame time 'hearing a great noiſe, was going up as 'ſoon as I had pulled off my things; 'but I hope, continued ſhe, in a whin-'ing tone, nothing has happened to my 'dear Miſs Betſy.'—'Whatever has hap-'pened, ſaid Mr. Trueworth, fiercely, will 'be enquired into;—in the mean time, all 'we require of you is to ſend ſomebody 'for a coach.'

Mrs. Modely then ringing a bell, a maid ſervant appeared, and what Mr. Trueworth had requeſted was immediately performed; but, though Miſs Betſy now ſaw herſelf ſafe from the miſchief which had ſo lately threatened her, ſhe had ſtill emotions very terrible to ſuſtain, and would have, doubtleſs, thrown her into a ſwoon, if not vented in a violent flood of tears.

Being arrived at the houſe where Miſs Betſy lodged, juſt as Mr. Trueworth was helping her out of the coach, they were met by the two Mr. Thoughtleſs's coming out of the door: — they ſtarted back at a ſight, which, it muſt be confeſſed, had ſomething very alarming in it; — they beheld their ſiſter all pale and trembling;—her eyes half drowned in tears,

—her garments torn, — her hair hanging looſely wild about her neck and face, — every token of deſpair about her, — and in this condition conducted by a gentleman, a ſtranger indeed to the one, but known by the other to have been once paſſionately in love with her, might well occaſion odd ſort of apprehenſions in both the brothers, eſpecially in the younger.

The ſudden ſight of her brothers, made a freſh attack on the already ſo much weakened ſpirits of Miſs Betſy, and ſhe would have ſunk on the threſhold of the door, as Mr. Trueworth quitted her hand, in order to preſent it to Mr. Francis, if the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs, ſeeing her totter, had not that inſtant catched her in his arms.

'Confuſion! cried Mr. Francis, what 'does all this mean? — Trueworth, is it 'thus you bring my ſiſter home?' — 'I 'am heartily ſorry for the occaſion,' — ſaid Mr. Trueworth, 'ſince' — He was going one, but Mr, Francis, fired with a miſtaken rage, prevented him, crying out, ''Sdeath, ſir, how came you with my 'ſiſter?' — Mr. Trueworth, a little provoked to find the ſervice he had done ſo ill requited, replied in a diſdainful tone — 'She will inform you, — after that, if

'you

'you have any farther demands upon me,
'you know where I am to be found;—
'I have no leiſure now to anſwer your
'interrogatories.'

With theſe words he ſtept haſtily into the coach, and ordered to be drove to the two red lamps in Golden-ſquare.

Miſs Betſy's ſenſes were entirely loſt for ſome moments, ſo that ſhe knew nothing of what paſſed. — Mr. Francis hearing what directions Mr. Trueworth had given the coachman, was for following him and forcing him to an explanation, but the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs prevailed on him to ſtay 'till they ſhould hear what their ſiſter would ſay on this affair.

She was carried into her apartment, rather dead than alive, but being laid on a ſettee, and proper means applied, ſhe ſoon returned to a condition capable of ſatisfying their curioſity.

CHAP. XVI.

Will not tire the reader.

MISS Betſy having her heart and head full of the obligation ſhe had to Mr. Trueworth, and on the firſt diſcovery of her ſenſes, thinking he was ſtill near her, cried out, — 'Oh! Mr. Trueworth, how 'ſhall I thank the goodneſs you have 'ſhewn me! —— I have no words to do 'it; — it is from my brothers you muſt 'receive thoſe demonſtrations of grati-'tude, which are not in my power to 'give.'

The brothers looked ſometimes on her, and ſometimes on each other, with a good deal of ſurprize all the time ſhe was ſpeaking, 'till perceiving ſhe had done, — 'To 'whom are you talking ,ſiſter?' ſaid Mr. Francis, 'here is nobody but my brother 'and myſelf.'

'Bleſs me!' cried ſhe, looking round the room, 'how wild my head is!' — 'I knew not where I was, — I thought 'myſelf ſtill in the houſe of that wicked 'woman that betrayed me, and ſaw my 'generous

'generous deliverer chaſtiſing the monſter 'that attempted my deſtruction.'

'Who was that monſter?' demanded the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs, haſtily. — 'A villain without a name, ſaid ſhe, 'for that of Sir Frederick Fineer was but 'aſſumed, to hide a common cheat!— 'a robber!'— 'And who, ſay you, re-'joined Mr. Francis, was your deliverer?' 'Who, but that beſt of men! anſwered 'ſhe, Mr. Trueworth! — O brothers, 'if you have any regard for me, or for 'the honour of our family, you can ne-'ver too much revere, or love the 'honour, and the virtue of that worthy 'man'

'You ſee, Frank, how greatly you 'have been to blame, ſaid the elder Mr. 'Thoughtleſs, and how much more ſo 'you might have been, if I had not diſ-'ſwaded you from following that gentle-'man, who, I now perceive, was the ſa-'viour, not the invader of our ſiſter's in-'nocence.'—'I bluſh, replied Mr. Francis, 'at the remembrance of my raſhneſs,— 'I ought, indeed, to have known True-'worth better.'

There paſſed no more between them on this ſubject; but on finding Miſs Betſy

grew more compoſed, and able to continue a converſation, they obliged her to repeat the particulars of what had happened to her, which ſhe accordingly did, with the greateſt veracity imaginable, omitting nothing of moment in the ſhocking narrative.

The calling to mind a circumſtance ſo deteſtable to her natural delicacy, threw her, however, into ſuch agonies, which made them think it their province, rather to conſole her under the affliction ſhe had ſuſtained, than to chide her for the inadvertency that had brought it on her.

They ſtayed ſupper with her, which, to ſave her the trouble of ordering, Mr. Thoughtleſs went to an adjacent tavern, and gave directions for it himſelf, — made her drink ſeveral glaſſes of wine, and both of them did every thing in their power to chear and reſtore her ſpirits to their former tone; after which they retired and left her to enjoy what repoſe the preſent anxieties of her mind would permit her to take.

Though the condition Miſs Betſy was in, made theſe gentlemen treat her with the above-mentioned tenderneſs, yet both of them were highly incenſed againſt her, for

for ſo undadviſedly encouraging the pretenſions of a man, whoſe character ſhe knew nothing of, but from the mouth of a little mantua-maker: —- her conſenting to ſup with him at the houſe of that woman, and afterwards running with her into his very bed-chamber, were actions, which to them ſeemed to have no excuſe.

Mr. Francis, as of the two having the moſt tender affection for her, had the moſt deep concern in whatever related to her: —'If ſhe were either a fool, ſaid he, ſtamping with extreme vexation or of a vicious inclination, her conduct would leave no room for wonder;—but for a girl, who wants neither wit nor virtue, to expoſe herſelf in this manner, has ſomething in it inconſiſtent!—unnatural! —monſtrous!'

'I doubt not, cried he again, if the truth could be known, that it was ſome ſuch ridiculous adventure as this, that loſt her the affection of Mr. Trueworth, though her pride and his honour joined to conceal it.'

The elder Mr. Thoughtleſs was entirely of his brother's opinion in all theſe points, and both of them now were more con-

firmed than ever, that marriage was the only ſure guard for the reputation of a young woman of their ſiſter's temper. — Mr. Munden had been there the day before, and, as he told Miſs Betſy he would do, declared himſelf to them; ſo it was reſolved between them, that if, on proper enquiry, his circumſtances ſhould be found ſuch as he ſaid they were, to clap up the wedding with all imaginable expedition.

But no buſineſs, how important or perplexing ſoever it may be, can render gratitude and good manners forgotten, or neglected, by perſons of underſtanding and politeneſs: theſe gentlemen thought a viſit to Mr. Thoughtleſs neither could or ought to be diſpenſed with, in order to make him thoſe acknowledgments the ſervice he had done their ſiſter demanded from them.

Accordingly, the next morning Mr. Thoughtleſs, accompanied by his brother, went in his own coach, which he made be got ready, as well in reſpect to himſelf, as to the perſon he was going to viſit.

They found Mr. Trueworth at home, who, doubtleſs, was not without ſome ex-

expectation of their coming, — on their ſending up their names, he received them at the top of the ſtair-caſe with ſo graceful an affability, and ſweetneſs in his air, as convinced the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs, that the high character his brother Frank had given of that gentleman was far from exceeding the bounds of truth.

It is certain, indeed, that Mr. Trueworth, ſince the ecclairciſement of the Denham affair, had felt the ſevereſt remorſe within himſelf, for having given credit to that wicked aſperſion caſt upon Miſs Betſy, and the reflection that fortune had now put it in his power to attone for the wrong he had been guilty of to that lady, by the late ſervice he had done her, gave a ſecret ſatisfaction to his mind, that diffuſed itſelf through all his air, and gave a double ſprightlineſs to thoſe eyes, which, by the report of all who ever ſaw him, ſtood in need of no addition to their luſtre.

The elder Mr. Thoughtleſs having made his compliments on the occaſion, which had brought him thither, the younger advanced, though with a look ſomewhat more downcaſt than ordinary; — 'I know, not ſir,' ſaid he, 'whether 'any teſtimonies of the gratitude I owe 'you

'you will be acceptable, after the folly 'into which a miſtaken rage tranſported 'me laſt night,' — 'Dear Frank,' cried 'Mr. Trueworth ſmiling, and giving him his hand, in token of a perfect reconciliation, 'none of theſe formal ſpeeches, — 'we know each other, — you are by nature warm, and the little philoſophy I 'am maſter of, makes me think whatever is born with us pleads its own excuſe; — beſides, to ſee me with your 'ſiſter in the condition ſhe then was, entirely juſtifies your miſtake.' — 'Dear 'Trueworth,' replied the other, embracing him, you are born every way to 'overcome.'

Mr. Thoughtleſs returning to ſome expreſſions of his ſenſe of the obligation he had conferred upon their whole family: — 'Sir, I have done no more,' ſaid Mr. Trueworth, 'than what every man of 'honour would think himſelf bound to 'do for any woman in the like diſtreſs, 'much more for a lady ſo deſerving as 'Miſs Betſy Thoughtleſs. — I happened 'almoſt miraculouſly to be in the ſame 'houſe with her when ſhe ſtood in need 'of aſſiſtance, and I ſhall always place 'the day in which my good ſtars con'ducted me to the reſcue of her innocence

'among

'among the moſt fortunate ones of my 'whole life.

In the courſe of their converſation, the brothers ſatisfied Mr. Trueworth's curioſity, by acquainting him with the means by which their ſiſter had been ſeduced into the danger he had ſo happily delivered her from, and Mr. Trueworth in his turn informed them of the accident that had ſo ſeaſonably brought him to her relief; which latter, as the reader is yet ignorant of, 'tis proper ſhould be related.

'Having ſent,' ſaid he, 'for my 'ſteward to come to town, on account 'of ſome leaſes I am to ſign, the poor 'man had the misfortune to break his 'leg as he was ſtepping out of the ſtage-'coach, and was carried directly to Mrs. 'Modely's, where, it ſeems, he has for-'merly lodged; — this caſualty obliged 'me to go to him: — as a maid-ſervant 'was ſhewing me to his room, which is 'up two-pair of ſtairs, I heard the ruſt-'ling of ſilks behind me, and caſting my 'eyes over the baniſter, I ſaw Miſs Betſy, 'and a woman with her, who I ſince 'found was Mrs. Modely, paſs haſtily 'into a room on the firſt floor.

'A

'A curioſity,' continued he, 'which I 'cannot very well account for, induced 'me to aſk the nurſe who attends my 'ſteward, what lodgers there were be-'low?' —— To which ſhe replied, that they ſaid he was a baronet, but that ſhe believed nothing of it, for the two fellows that paſſed for his ſervants were always with him, and ſhe believed eat at the ſame table, for they never dined in the kitchen; — 'beſides,' ſaid ſhe. 'I 'have ſeen two or three ſhabby, ill looked 'men, that have more the appearance of 'pick-pockets, than companions for a 'gentleman, come after him; and, in-'deed, I believe he is no better than a 'rogue himſelf.'

'Though I was extremely ſorry,' purſued Mr. Trueworth, 'to find Miſs Betſy 'ſhould be the gueſt of ſuch a perſon, 'yet I could not forbear laughing at the 'deſcription this woman gave of him; 'which, however, proved to be a very 'juſt one. — I had not been there above 'half an hour before I heard the ſhrieks 'of a woman, and fancied, the voice of 'Miſs Betſy, though I had never heard 'it made uſe of in that manner; —— I 'went however to the ſtop of the ſtair-'caſe, where hearing the cries redoubled,

'I

'I drew my ſword, and ran down; the 'door of the chamber was locked, but 'ſetting my foot againſt it, I eaſily burſt 'it open, and believe entered but juſt in 'time to ſave the lady from violation.

'On ſeeing the face,' added he, 'of 'this pretended baronet, I immediately 'knew him to be a fellow that waited on 'a gentleman I was intimate with at 'Paris. — What his real name is I either 'never heard or have forgot; for his 'maſter never called him by any other 'than that of Quaint, on account of the 'romantic and affected manner in which 'he always ſpoke: — the raſcal has a 'little ſmattering of Latin, and I believe 'has dipped into a good many of the 'ancient authors; — he ſeemed indeed to 'have more of the the fop than the knave 'in him, but he ſoon diſcovered himſelf 'to be no leſs the one than the other, for 'he ran away from his maſter, and rob-'bed him of things to a conſiderable va-'lue; — he was purſued and taken, but 'the gentleman permitted him to make 'his eſcape, without delivering him into 'the hands of juſtice.'

After this mutual recapitulation, the two brothers began to conſider what was to

to be done for the chaſtiſement of the villain, as the proſecuting him by law would expoſe their ſiſter's folly, and prove the moſt mortal ſtab that could be given to her reputation; — the one was for cutting off his ears, — the other for pinning him againſt the wall of the very chamber where he had offered the inſult; to which Mr. Trueworth replied, 'I muſt confeſs 'his crime deſerves much more than 'your keeneſt reſentments can inflict; but 'theſe are puniſhments which are only 'the prerogative of law, to which, as you 'rightly judge, it would be improper to 'have recourſe: — I am afraid therefore 'you muſt content yourſelves with barely 'caning him: — that is,' continued he, 'if he is yet in the way for it, but I 'ſhrewdly ſuſpect he has before now 'made off, as well as his confederates, 'the parſon, and the ſurgeon; — however I think it would be right to go to 'the houſe of this Modely, and ſee what 'is to be done.'

To this they both readily agreed, and they all went together; but as they were going. — 'O! what eternal plagues,' ſaid Mr. Francis, 'has the vanity of this girl 'brought upon all her friends?' — 'You 'will ſtill be making too haſty reflections,' cried

cried Mr. Trueworth; — 'I hope to ſee 'Miſs Betſy one day as much out-ſhine 'the greateſt part of her ſex in prudence, 'as ſhe has always done in beauty.'

By this time they were at Mrs. Modely's door; but the maid, whom ſhe had tutored for the purpoſe, told them that Sir Frederick Fineer was gone:—that he would not pay her miſtreſs for the lodgings, becauſe ſhe had ſuffered him to be interrupted in them; — and that ſhe was ſick in bed with the fright of what had happened, and could not be ſpoke to.

On this Mr. Trueworth ran up to his ſteward's chamber, not doubting but he ſhould there be certainly informed whether the mock baronet was gone or not; — the two Mr. Thoughtleſſes waited in the parlour 'till his return, which was immediately, with intelligence, that the wretch had left the houſe ſoon after himſelf had conducted Miſs Betſy thence.

They had now no longer any buſineſs here; but the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs could not take leave of Mr. Trueworth without intreating the favour of ſeeing him at his houſe: to which he replied, that he believed he ſhould not ſtay long in town, and while he did ſo, had buſi-

neſs

neſs that very much engroſſed his time, but at his return ſhould rejoice in an opportunity of cultivating a friendſhip with him. — With this, and ſome other compliments they ſeparated; — the two brothers went home, and Mr. Trueworth went where his inclinations led him.

CHAP. XVII.

Love in death, — an example rather to be wondered at than imitated.

ON Mr. Trueworth's going to Sir Bazil's, he found the two ladies with all the appearance of the moſt poignant grief in their faces:—Mrs. Wellair's eyes were full of tears, but thoſe of her lovely ſiſter ſeemed to flow from an exhauſtleſs ſpring.

This was a ſtrange phœnomenon to Mr. Trueworth; — it ſtruck a ſudden damp upon the gaiety of his ſpirits, and he had but juſt recovered his ſurpriſe enough to aſk the meaning, when Mrs. Wellair prevented him, by ſaying, 'O! Mr. Trueworth, we have a melancholy account to give you; — poor Mrs. Blanchfield is no more.'

'Dead!'

'Dead! — cried he. —— 'Dead,' repeated Miſs Harriot; — 'but the manner of it will affect you moſt.' — 'A much leſs motive,' replied he, 'if capable of giving pain to you, muſt certainly affect me; — but I beſeech you, madam,' continued he, 'keep me not in ſuſpence.'

'You may remember,' ſaid Miſs Harriot, ſighing, 'that ſome time ago we told you, that Mrs. Blanchfield had taken leave of us, and was gone down to Windſor: — it ſeems ſhe had not been long there before ſhe was ſeized with a diſorder, which the phyſicians term a fever on the ſpirits: — whatever it was, ſhe lingered in it for about three weeks, and died yeſterday; — ſome days before ſhe ſent for a lawyer, and diſpoſed of her effects by will: —— ſhe alſo wrote a letter to me, which laſt ſhe put into the hands of a maid, who has lived with her almoſt from her infancy, binding her by the moſt ſolemn vow to deliver to me as ſoon as poſſible after ſhe was dead, and not 'till then on any motive whatſoever.

'The good creature,' purſued Miſs Harriot, 'hurried up to town this morning,

'ing, to perform her lady's laſt injunc-
'tions: — this is the letter I received
'from her,' continued ſhe, taking it out of her pocket, and preſenting it to him,—
'read it, and join with us in lamenting
'the fatal effects of a paſſion people take
'ſo much pains to inſpire.'

The impatience Mr. Trueworth was in for the full explanation of a myſtery, which, perhaps, he had ſome gueſs into the truth of, hindred him from making any anſwer to what Miſs Harriot had ſaid upon the occaſion; — he haſtily opened the letter, and found in it theſe lines:

To Miſs Harriot Loveit.

'Dear Happy Friend,

'AS my faithful Lucy at the ſame
'time ſhe delivers this into your hands,
'brings you alſo the intelligence of my
'death; the ſecret it diſcovers cannot
'raiſe in you any jealous apprehenſions;
'— I have been your rival, my dear Har-
'riot, but when I found you were mine,
'wiſhed you not to loſe what I would
'have given the world, had I been miſ-
'treſs of it, to have gained; —— the firſt
'moment I ſaw the too agreeable Mr.
'Trueworth, ſomething within told me,
'he was my fate, — that according as I

'ap-

'peared in his eyes, I muſt either be 'happy or no more;—it has proved the 'latter, — death has ſeized upon my 'heart, but cannot drive my paſſion 'thence: whether I ſhall carry it beyond 'the grave I ſhall know before this 'reaches you, but at preſent I think it is 'ſo incorporated with my immortal part, 'as not to be ſeparated by the diſſolution 'of my frame.

'I will not pretend to have had ſo 'much command over myſelf, as to re-'frain taking any ſtep for the forwarding 'my deſires; before I was convinced of 'his attachment to you, I cauſed a let-'ter to be wrote to him, making him an 'offer of the heart and fortune of a 'perſon, unnamed indeed, but mentioned 'as one not altogether unworthy of his 'acceptance: — this he anſwered as re-'queſted, and ingenuouſly confeſſed, that 'the whole affections of his ſoul were al-'ready devoted to another. — I had then 'no more to do with hope, nor had any 'thing to attempt but the concealing my 'deſpair; — this made me quit London, 'and all that was valuable to me in it. '— I flattered myſelf, alas! that time 'and abſence would reſtore my reaſon; '— but, as I ſaid before, my doom was 'fixed, — irrevocably fixed! and I ſoon

'found

'found, by a thouſand ſymptoms of an 'inward decay, that to be ſenſible of that 'angelic man's perfections, and to live 'without him, are things incompatible in 'nature; — even now while I am wri-'ting, I feel the icy harbingers of death 'creep through my veins, benumbing as 'they paſs; — ſoon, — very ſoon ſhall I 'be reduced to a cold lump of ſenſeleſs 'clay; indeed I have now no wiſh for 'life, nor buſineſs to tranſact below. — 'I have ſettled my worldly affairs, and 'diſpoſed of the effects that heaven has 'bleſſed me with, to thoſe I think moſt 'worthy of them. — My laſt will is in 'the hands of Mr. Markland the lawyer, '— I hope he is an honeſt man; but leaſt 'he ſhould prove otherwiſe, let Mr. True-'worth know, I have made him maſter 'of half that fortune, which once I ſhould 'have rejoiced to have laid wholly at his 'feet; — all my jewels I entreat you to 'accept, — they can add nothing to your 'beauty, but may ſerve to ornament your 'wedding garments; — Lucy has them 'in her poſſeſſion, and will deliver them 'to you.

'And now, my dear Miſs Harriot, I 'have one favour to beg of you, and that 'is, that you exert all the influence your 'merits claim over the heart of Mr. True-

'worth,

'worth, to engage him to accompany 'you in ſeeing me laid in the earth. — I 'know your gentle generous nature too 'well to doubt you will deny me this re-'queſt, and the very idea, that you will 'aſk, and he will grant, gives, methinks, 'a new vigour to my enfeebled ſpirits. '— O! if departed ſouls are permitted, 'as ſome ſay they are, to look down on 'what paſſes beneath the moon, how will 'mine triumph, — how exult to ſee my 'poor remains thus honoured! — thus at-'tended! — I can no more but this, ---- 'may you make happy the beſt of men, 'and may he make you the happieſt of 'women. ----- Farewel,------ eternally fare-'well, ---- be aſſured, that as I lived, ſo I 'die,

'With the greateſt ſincerity,

'Dear Miſs Harriot,

'Your's, &c.

'J. BLANCHEIELD.

'P. S. Be ſo good to give my laſt adieus 'to my dear Mrs. Wellair; — ſhe will 'find I have not forgot her, nor my 'little godſon, in my bequeſts.'

How would the vain, unthinking fop have exulted on ſuch a proof of his imagined merit?———how would the ſordid avaritious man, in the pleaſure of finding ſo unexpected an acceſſion to his wealth, have forgot all compaſſion for the hand that gave it! — Mr. Trueworth, on the contrary, bluſhed at having ſo much more aſcribed to him, than he would allow himſelf to think he deſerved, and would gladly have been deprived of the beſt part of his fortune, rather than have received an addition to it by ſuch fatal means.

The accident, however, was ſo aſtoniſhing to him, that he ſcarce believed it real, nor could what he read in the letter under her own hand, nor all Mrs. Wellair, and Miſs Harriot alledged, perſuade him to think, at leaſt to acknowledge, that the lady's death was owing to a hopeleſs flame for him.

While they were ſpeaking Sir Bazil came in; — he had been at home when his ſiſter received the letter, and had heard what Lucy ſaid of her miſtreſs's indiſpoſition, and was therefore no ſtranger to any part of the affair.

Well

'Well, Trueworth,' ſaid he to that gentleman, 'I have often endeavoured to 'emulate, and have even envied the great 'talents you are maſter of, but am now 'reconciled, to nature for not beſtowing 'them on me, leſt they might prove of 'the ſame ill conſequences to ſome women 'as your's has been to Mrs. Blanchfield.'

'Dear Sir Bazil,' replied Mr. Trueworth, 'do not attempt to force me into 'an imagination, which would render me 'at once both vain and wretched. — 'Chance might direct the partial inclina-'tion of this lady to have kinder thoughts 'of me than I could either merit or re-'turn; but I ſhould be loth to believe, 'that they have produced the ſad event 'we now lament.'

'I am of opinion, indeed,' ſaid Sir Bazil, 'that there are many who deceive 'themſelves, as well as the world, in this 'point. — People are apt to miſtake that 'for love, which is only the effect of 'pride for a diſappointment; but it would 'be unjuſt to ſuppoſe this was the caſe 'with Mrs. Blanchfield: — the generous 'legacy ſhe has bequeathed to you, and 'the tenderneſs with which ſhe treats my 'ſiſter, leaves no room to ſuſpect her ſoul

'was tainted with any of thoſe turbulent 'emotions, which diſgrace the name of 'love, and yet are looked upon as the 'conſequence of that paſſion; — ſhe 'knew no jealouſy, — harboured no re-'venge, — the affection ſhe had for you 'was ſimple and ſincere, and meeting no 'return preyed only upon herſelf, and by 'degrees conſumed the ſprings of life.'

'I am glad, however,' ſaid the elder ſiſter of Sir Bazil, 'to find that Mr. True-'worth has nothing to reproach himſelf with, on this unhappy ſcore, — ſome 'men, on receiving a letter of the nature 'he did, would through mere curioſity of 'knowing on whoſe account it came, have 'ſent an anſwer of encouragement; — it 'muſt be owned, therefore, that the com-'mand he had over himſelf in this act of 'generoſiy, to his unknown admirer, de-'manded all the recompence in her power 'to make.'

Mr. Trueworth, whoſe modeſty had been ſufficiently wounded in this conver-ſation, haſtily replied, 'Madam, what 'you by an exceſs of goodneſs are pleaſed 'to call generoſity, was, in effect, no 'more than a piece of common honeſty: '— the man capable of deceiving a wo-'man, who regards him, is no leſs a

'villain

'villain, than he who defrauds his neigh-
'bour of the caſh intruſted into his hands.
'— the unfortunate Mrs. Blanchfield did
'me the honour to depend on my ſince-
'rity and ſecrecy; --- I did but my duty
'in obſerving both, — and ſhe, in ſo
'highly over-rating that act of duty,
'ſhewed indeed the magnanimity of her
'own mind, but adds no merit to mine.'

'I could almoſt wiſh it did not,' ſaid Miſs Harriot, ſighing.— 'Madam!' cried Mr. Trueworth, looking earneſtly on her, as not able to comprehend what ſhe meant by theſe words.--- 'Indeed,' reſumed ſhe, 'I could almoſt wiſh, that you were a 'little leſs deſerving than you are, ſince 'the eſteem you enforce is of ſo dange-'rous a kind,' --- She uttered this with ſo inexpreſſible a tenderneſs in her voice and eyes, that he could not reſtrain himſelf from kiſſing her hand in the moſt paſſionate manner, though in the preſence of her brother and ſiſter, crying, at the ſame time, 'I deſire no more of the 'world's eſteem, than juſt ſo much as may 'defend my lovely Harriot from all blame, 'for receiving my addreſſes.'

They afterwards fell into ſome diſcourſe concerning what was really deſerving admiration, and what was ſo only in appear-

ance, in which many miſtakes in judging were detected, and the extreme weakneſs of giving implicitly into the opinion of others, expoſed by examples ſuitable to the occaſion.

But theſe are inquiſitions which 'tis poſſible would not be very agreeable to the preſent age, and it would be madneſs to riſque the diſpleaſure of the multitude for the ſake of gratifying a few; — ſo the reader muſt excuſe the repetition of what was ſaid by this agreeable company on that ſubject.

CHAP. XVIII.

Diſplays Miſs Betſy in her penitentials, and the manner in which ſhe behaved after having met with ſo much matter for the humiliation of her vanity, as alſo ſome farther particulars, equally worthy the attention of the curious.

WHILE Miſs Betſy had her brothers with her, and was treated by them with a tenderneſs beyond what ſhe could have expected, juſt after the unlucky adventure ſhe had fallen into, ſhe felt not that

that remorſe and vexation, which it might be ſaid her preſent ſituation demanded.

But when they were gone, and ſhe was left intirely to thoſe reflections, which their preſence and good humour had only retarded, how did they come with double force upon her! — To think ſhe had received the addreſſes, and entertained with a miſtaken reſpect, the loweſt, and moſt abject dreg of mankind; — that ſhe had expoſed herſelf to the inſults of that ruffian; — that it had not been in her power to defend herſelf from his taking liberties with her, the moſt ſhocking to her delicacy, and that ſhe was on the very point of becoming the victim of his baſe deſigns upon her, made her feel over again, in idea, all the horrors of her real danger.

By turns, indeed, ſhe bleſſed heaven for her eſcape; — but then the means to which ſhe was indebted for that eſcape, was a freſh ſtab to her pride.—'I am 'preſerved, 'its true,' ſaid ſhe, 'from 'ruin and everlaſting infamy; — but then 'by whom am I preſerved? — by the 'man, who once adored, — then ſlighted, '— and muſt now deſpiſe me. — If no-'thing but a miracle could ſave me, O! 'why, good heaven, was not that miracle 'performed by any inſtrument but him!

'—What triumph to him!—What laſting ſhame to me, has this unfortunate accident produced!'

'Alas!—continued ſhe, weeping,—'I wanted not this proof of his honour,—his courage,—his generoſity;—nor was there any need of my being reduced in the manner he found me, to make him think me undeſerving of his affection.'

Never was a heart torn with a greater variety of anguiſh, than that of this unfortunate young lady:—as ſhe yet was ignorant of what ſteps her brothers intended to take in this affair, and feared they might be ſuch as would render what had happened to her public to the world, ſhe fell into reflections that almoſt turned her brain;—ſhe repreſented to herſelf all the ſarcaſms,---all the comments, that ſhe imagined; and probably would have been made on her behaviour,—her danger, and her delivery;---all theſe thoughts were inſupportable to her,---ſhe reſolved to hide herſelf for ever from the town, and paſs her future life in obſcurity;---ſo direful to her were the apprehenſions of becoming the object of deriſion, that rather than endure it ſhe would ſuffer any.

In

In the preſent deſpondency of her humour, ſhe would certainly have fled the town, and gone directly down to L---e, if ſhe had not known, that Sir Ralph and lady Truſty were expected here in a very ſhort time; and ſhe was ſo young when ſhe left that country, that ſhe could not think of any family to whom it was proper for her to go, without ſome previous preparations.

All her pride, ---- her gaiety, -----her vanity of attracting admiration; ------ in fine, all that had compoſed her former character, ſeemed now to be loſt and ſwallowed up in the ſenſe of that bitter ſhame and contempt, in which ſhe imagined herſelf involved, and ſhe wiſhed for nothing but to be unſeen, unregarded, and utterly forgotten, by all that had ever known her, --- being almoſt ready to cry out with Dido,

'Nor art, nor nature's hand can ceaſe my grief,
'Nothing but death, the wretch's laſt relief;
'Then, farewel youth, and all the joys that dwell
'With youth and life,—and life itſelf, farewel.'

The deſpair of that unhappy queen, ſo elegantly deſcribed by the poet, could not far tranſcend what poor Miſs Betſy ſuſtained during this whole cruel night; --- nor did the day afford her any more tranquility ;--- on the contrary, ſhe hated the light, --- the ſight even of her own ſervants was irkſome to her ; --- ſhe ordered, that whoever came to viſit her, except her brothers, ſhould be denied admittance, --- complained of a violent pain in her head,--- would not be prevailed upon to take the leaſt refreſhment, but kept herſelf upon the bed, indulging all the horrors of deſpair and grief.

In the afternoon Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs came, ---- ſeemed a little ſurpriſed to find his brother was not there, and told Miſs Betſy, that having been called different ways, they had appointed to meet at her lodgings, in order to have ſome ſerious diſcourſe with her, concerning her future ſettlement ; to which ſhe replied, that her late fright hung ſo heavy on her ſpirits, that ſhe was in little condition at preſent to reſolve on any thing.

She ſpoke this with ſo dejected an air, that Mr. Francis, who truly loved her, in ſpite of all the reſentment he had for the errors

errors of her conduct, could not forbear ſaying a great many tender things to her; but nothing afforded her ſo much conſolation, as the account he gave her, that no proſecution would be commenced againſt the ſham Sir Frederick Fineer: --- 'The villain,' ſaid he, 'is run away from 'his lodgings, but queſtionleſs might eaſi-'ly be found out, and brought to juſtice; 'but the misfortune is, that in caſes of 'this nature, the offended muſt ſuffer as 'well as the offender; --- to puniſh him, 'muſt expoſe you; --- you ſee, therefore, 'to what your inadvertency has reduced 'you, --- injured to the moſt ſhocking 'degree, yet denied the ſatisfaction of re-'venge,'

Miſs Betſy only anſwering with her, tears,--- 'I ſpeak not this to upbraid you,' reſumed he, 'and would be far from add-'ing to the affliction you are in; --- on 'the contrary, I would have you be 'chearful, and rejoice more in the eſcape 'you have had, than bewail the danger 'you have paſt through; --- but then, my 'dear ſiſter, I would wiſh you alſo to 'put yourſelf into a condition, which 'may defend you from attempts of this 'vile nature.'

He was going on with ſomething further, when the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs came in: — 'I have been detained,' ſaid that gentleman, 'longer than I expected; '—my friend is going to have his picture 'drawn, and knowing I have been in Italy, 'would needs have my judgment upon 'the painter's ſkill.'

'I ſuppoſe then,' ſaid Mr. Francis, — 'your eyes have been feaſted with the re-'ſemblance of a great number of beauties, 'either real or fictitious.' — 'No faith,' replied the other, 'I believe none of the 'latter; — the man ſeems to be too much 'an artiſt in his profeſſion, to ſtand in 'any need of having recourſe to that ſtale 'ſtratagem of inviting cuſtomers, by ex-'hibiting ſhadows, which have no ſub-'ſtances, but in his own brain, and I 'muſt do him the juſtice to ſay, that I 'never ſaw life imitated to more per-'fection.'

'Then you ſaw ſome faces there you 'were acquainted with,' ſaid the younger Mr. Thoughtleſs. — 'Two or three,' anſwered the elder; —— but one, which 'more particularly ſtruck me, as I had 'ſeen the original but twice; — but once 'indeed to take any notice of: --- it was

'of

'of your friend, --- the gentleman we 'waited on this morning.'

'What! --- Trueworth!' --- demanded Mr. Francis.--- 'The ſame,' reſumed the other:---'never was there a more perfect 'likeneſs; --- he is drawn in miniature; 'I believe, by the ſize of the piece, in-'tended to be worn at a lady's watch;--- 'but I looked on it through my magni-'fier, and thought I ſaw his very ſelf be-'fore me.'

He ſaid much more in praiſe of the excellence of this artiſt, as indeed he was very full of it, having a deſire his favourite miſtreſs's picture ſhould be drawn, and was tranſported to have found a perſon, who, he thought, could do it ſo much juſtice.

Though Miſs Betſy ſate all this time in a penſive poſture, and ſeemed not to take any notice of this diſcourſe, yet no part of it was loſt upon her. --- 'You extol this 'painter ſo much, brother,' ſaid ſhe, that 'if I thought my picture worth drawing, 'I would ſit to him myſelf.---Pray,' continued ſhe, 'Where does he live, and 'what is his name?'---Mr. Thoughtleſs having ſatisfied her curioſity in theſe points, no more was ſaid on the occaſion, and

and the brothers immediately entered into a converſation, upon the buſineſs which had brought them thither.

The elder of them remonſtrated to her, in the ſtrongeſt terms he was able, the perpetual dangers to which, through the baſeneſs of the world, and her own inadvertency, ſhe was liable every day to be expoſed:---'This laſt ugly accident, ſaid he, 'I hope may be huſhed up, --- 'Mr. 'Trueworth, I dare believe, is too gene-'rous to make any mention of it, and 'thoſe concerned in it will be ſecret for 'their own ſakes; --- but you may not al-'ways meet the ſame proſperous chance. '--- It behoves us therefore, who muſt 'ſhare in your diſgrace, as well as have a 'concern in your happineſs, to inſiſt on 'your putting yourſelf into a different 'mode of life:---Mr. Munden makes very 'fair propoſals; --- he has given me leave 'to examine the rent-roll of his eſtate, 'which accordingly I have ordered a law-'yer to do;---he will ſettle an hundred and 'fifty pounds per annum on you for pin-'money, and jointure you in four hundred, 'and I think your fortune does not entitle 'you to a better offer.'

'Brother, I have had better,' replied 'Miſs Betſy, with a ſigh.---'But you re-'jected

'jected it,' cried Mr. Francis, with ſome warmth;—'and you are not to expect a 'ſecond Trueworth to fall to your ſhare.' —'Let us talk no more of what is paſt,' reſumed the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs;—— 'but endeavour to perſwade our ſiſter to 'accept of that, which at preſent is moſt for her advantage.'

Both theſe gentlemen, in their different turns, made uſe of every argument that could be brought on the occaſion, to prevail on Miſs Betſy to give them ſome aſſurance, that as now there was no better proſpect for her, ſhe would trifle no longer with the pretenſions of Mr. Munden, but reſolve to marry him, in caſe the condition of his affairs was proved, upon enquiry, to be ſuch as he had repreſented to them.

She made, for a great while, very little reply to all this;—her head was now indeed very full of ſomething elſe;—ſhe ſate in a kind of reſverie, and had a perfect abſence of mind, during this latter part of their diſcourſe;—ſhe heard, but heard without attention, and without conſidering the weight of any thing they urged; yet, at laſt, merely to get rid of their importunities and preſence, that ſhe might be alone to indulge her own meditations,

ſhe

ſhe ſaid as they ſaid, and promiſed to do whatever they required of her.

Mr. Thoughtleſs having now, as he imagined, brought her to the bent he wiſhed, took his leave; but Mr. Francis ſtayed ſome time longer, nor had, perhaps, gone ſo ſoon, if Miſs Betſy had not diſcovered a certain reſtleſſneſs, which made him think ſhe would be glad to be alone.

This was the firſt time ſhe had ever deſired his abſence, but now, indeed, moſt heartily did ſo; — ſhe had got a caprice in her brain, which raiſed ideas there, ſhe was in pain till ſhe had modelled, and brought to the perfection ſhe wanted. — What her brother had curſorily mentioned, concerning the picture of Mr. Trueworth, had made a much deeper impreſſion on her mind, than all the ſerious diſcourſe he had afterwards entertained her with; — ſhe longed to have in her poſſeſſion ſo exact a reſemblance of a man, who once had loved her, and for whom ſhe had always the moſt high eſteem, though her pride would never ſuffer her to ſhew it to any one, who profeſſed himſelf her lover. — 'This picture,' ſaid ſhe, 'by looking on it, will remind me of

'the obligation I have to him,—I might 'forget it elſe,—and I would not be un-'grateful;—though it is not in my nature 'to love, I may, nay I ought, after what 'he has done for me, to have a friendſhip 'for him.

She then began to conſider, whether there was a poſſibility of becoming the miſtreſs of what ſhe ſo much deſired; — ſhe had never given her mind to plotting,— ſhe had never been at the pains of any contrivances, but how to ornament her dreſs, or place the patches of her face with the moſt graceful art, and was extremely at a loſs what ſtratagem to form for the getting this picture into her hands; — at firſt, ſhe thought of going to the painter, and bribe him to take a copy of it for her own uſe;—'but then,' ſaid ſhe, 'a copy taken from a copy goes ſtill far-'ther from the original;—beſides, he may 'betray me, or he may not have time to 'do it, and I would leave nothing to 'chance. — No, I muſt have the very 'picture that my brother ſaw, that I 'may be ſure is like, for I know he is a 'judge.'

'Suppoſe,' cried ſhe again, 'I go un-'der the pretence of ſitting for my picture, 'and look over all his pieces,—'I fancy 'I may

'I may find an opportunity of ſlip-
'ping Trueworth's into my pocket,---
'I could ſend the value of it the next
'day, ſo the man would be no ſufferer
'by it.'

This project ſeemed feaſible to her for a time, but ſhe afterwards rejected it, on account, ſhe could not be ſure of committing the theft ſo artfully, as not to be detected in the fact; --- ſeveral other little ſtratagems ſucceeded this in her inventive brain, all which, on ſecond thoughts ſhe found either impoſſible to be executed, or could promiſe no certainty in their effects.

Sleep was no leſs a ſtranger to her eyes this night, than it had been the preceding one;---yet of how different a nature were the agitations which kept her waking:--- in the firſt, the ſhock of the inſult ſhe had ſuſtained, and the ſhame of her receiving her protection from him, by whom, of all men living, ſhe was at leaſt willing to be obliged, took up all her thoughts;---in the ſecond, ſhe was equally engroſſed by the impatience of having ſomething to preſerve him eternally in her mind.

After

After long revolving within herſelf, ſhe at laſt hit upon the means of accompliſhing her deſires; --- the riſque ſhe ran, indeed, was ſomewhat bold, but as it ſucceeded without ſuſpicion, ſhe had only to guard againſt accidents, that might occaſion a future diſcovery of what ſhe had done.

Early the next morning ſhe ſent to Blunt's, --- hired a handſome chaiſe and pair, with a coachman and two ſervants, in a livery different from that ſhe gave her own man; --- then dreſſed herſelf in a riding habit, and hunting-cap, which had been made for her, on her going down to Oxford, and ſhe had never been ſeen in by Mr. Trueworth; --- ſo that ſhe thought, ſhe might be pretty confident, that when he ſhould come to examine who had taken away his picture, the deſcription could never enable him to gueſs at the right perſon.

With this equipage ſhe went to the houſe where the painter lived; --- on enquiring for him by his name, he came immediately to know her commands.--- 'You have the picture here of Mr. Trueworth,' ſaid ſhe; 'pray is it ready?'--- 'Yes, madam,' anſwered he, 'I am juſt going

'going to carry it home.'—'I am glad 'then, ſir,' reſumed Miſs Betſy, 'that I 'am come time enough to ſave you that 'trouble: —— Mr. Trueworth went to 'Hampſtead laſt night, and being to fol-'low him this morning, he deſired I 'would bring it with me, and pay you 'the money,' — 'O, madam, as to the 'money,' ſaid he, 'I ſhall ſee Mr. True-'worth again;' — and then called to the man to bring down his picture. — 'In-'deed I ſhall not take it without paying 'you,' ſaid ſhe; 'but in the hurry I 'forgot to aſk him the ſum, — pray how 'much is it? —— 'My conſtant price, 'madam,' replied he, 'is ten guineas, 'and the gentleman never offered to beat 'me down.'

By this time the man had brought the picture down in a little box, which the painter opening, as he preſented to her, cried, 'Is it not a prodigious likeneſs, 'madam?' — 'Yes really, ſir,' ſaid ſhe, 'in my opinion there is no fault to be 'found,'—She then put the picture into her pocket,— counted ten guineas to him out of her purſe, and told him, with a ſmile, that ſhe believed he would very ſhortly have more buſineſs from the ſame quarter, — then bid the coachman drive on.

The

The coachman having previous orders what to do, was no ſooner out of ſight of the painter's houſe, than he turned down the firſt ſtreet, and carried Miſs Betſy directly home;—ſhe diſcharged her retinue, undreſſed herſelf with all the ſpeed ſhe could, and whoever had now ſeen her, would never have ſuſpected ſhe had been abroad.

This young lady was not of a temper to grieve long for any thing; — how deep ſoever ſhe was affected, the impreſſion wore off on the firſt new turn that offered itſelf.—All her remorſe,—all her vexation, for the baſe deſign laid againſt her at Mrs. Modely's, were diſſipated the moment ſhe took it into her head to get poſſeſſion of this picture, and the ſucceſs of her enterprize elated her beyond expreſſion.

It cannot be ſuppoſed, that it was altogether owing to the regard ſhe had for Mr Trueworth, though in effect much more than ſhe herſelf was yet ſenſible of, that ſhe took all this pains; it looks as if there was alſo ſome little mixture of female malice in the caſe. — Her brother had ſaid, that the picture ſeemed to be intended to be worn at a lady's watch; —ſhe

—ſhe doubted not but it was ſo, and the thoughts of diſappointing her rival's expectations, contributed greatly to the ſatisfaction ſhe felt at what ſhe had done.

CHAP. XIX.

Preſents the reader with ſome occurrences, which, from the foregoing preparations, might be expected, and alſo with others that may ſeem more ſurpriſing.

MISS Betſy was not deceived in her conjecture, in relation to the picture being deſigned as an offering to ſome lady: — Mr. Trueworth had not indeed ſate for it to pleaſe himſelf, but to oblige Miſs Harriot, who had given ſome hints, that ſuch a preſent would not be unwelcome to her.

It is a common thing with painters to keep the pieces in their own hands as long as they can, after they are finiſhed, eſpecially if they are of perſons endued by nature with any perfections, which may do honour to their art: — this gentleman was like others of his profeſſion,—he found it to his credit to ſhew Mr. Trueworth's picture

ture to as many as came to look over his paintings, and had detained it for ſeveral days beyond the time in which he had promiſed to ſend it, on pretence, that there were ſtill ſome little touches wanting in the drapery.

Mr. Trueworth growing a little impatient at the delay, as Miſs Harriot had aſked two or three times, in a gay manner, when ſhe ſhould ſee his reſemblance, went himſelf, in order to fetch it away: —the painter was ſurpriſed at ſight of him, and much more ſo when he demanded the picture; — he told him, however, the whole truth without heſitation, that he delivered it to a lady not above an hour before he came, who paid him the money for it, and ſaid that ſhe had called for it on his requeſt.

Nothing had ever happened that ſeemed more ſtrange to him;—he made a particular enquiry concerning the face, — age, — complexion, — ſhape, — ſtature, and even dreſs of the lady, who had put this trick upon him; and it was well for Miſs Betſy, that ſhe had taken all the precautions ſhe did, or ſhe had infallibly been diſcovered. --- A thing, which, perhaps, would have given her a more laſting confuſion,

fuſion, than ever her late unlucky adventure with the mock baronet.

She was, however, among all the ladies of his acquaintance, almoſt the only one who never came into his head on this occaſion; --- ſometimes he thought of one, ---ſometimes he thought of another; but on recollecting all the particulars of their behaviour towards him, could find no reaſon to aſcribe what had been done to any of them: --- Miſs Flora was the only perſon he could imagine capable of ſuch a think; --- he found it highly probable, that her love and invention had furniſhed her with the means of committing this innocent fraud; and though he was heartily vexed, that he muſt be at the trouble of ſitting for another picture, yet he could not be angry with the woman who had occaſioned it: ---- on the contrary, he thought there was ſomething ſo tender, and ſo delicate withal, in this proof of her paſſion, that it very much enhanced the pity and good-will he before had for her.

But while his generous heart was entertaining theſe too favourable and kind ſentiments of her, ſhe was employing her whole wicked wit, to make him appear the

the baſeſt of mankind, and alſo to render him the moſt unhappy.

She had found out every thing ſhe wanted to know, concerning Mr. Trueworth's courtſhip to Miſs Harriot, and flattered herſelf, that a lady bred in the country, and unacquainted with the artifices frequently practiſed in town, to blacken the faireſt characters, would eaſily be frighted into a belief of any thing ſhe attempted to inſpire her with.

In the vile hope, therefore, of accompliſhing ſo deteſtable a project, ſhe contrived a letter in the following terms:

To Miſs Harriot Loveit.

'Madam,

'WHERE innocence is about to ſuf-'fer, merely through its incapacity of 'ſuſpecting that ill in another it cannot 'be guilty of itſelf, common honeſty for-'bids a ſtander-by to be ſilent: — you 'are on the brink of a precipice, which 'if you fall into, it is not in the power 'of human art to ſave you.—Death only 'can remove you from miſery, — re-'morſe, — diſtraction, and woes without 'a name.—Trueworth, that ſly deceiver 'of your ſex, and moſt abandoned of his

'own, can only bring you a polluted 'heart, and proſtituted vows;—he made 'the moſt honourable profeſſions of love 'to a young lady of family and character, '—gained her affections,—I hope no 'more;—but whatever was between 'them, he baſely quitted her to mourn 'her ill-placed love, and ruined fame:— 'yet this, madam, is but his leaſt of 'crimes;—he has ſince practiſed his be-'traying arts on another, ſuperior to the 'former in every female virtue and ac-'compliſhments,—ſecond to none in 'beauty, and of a reputation ſpotleſs as 'the ſun, 'till an unhappy paſſion for that 'worſt of men obſcured its brightneſs, at 'leaſt in the eyes of the cenſorious;—he 'is, however, bound to her by the moſt 'ſolemn engagements that words can form 'under his own hand-writing; which, if 'ſhe does not in due time produce againſt 'him, it will be owing only to her too 'great modeſty:—Theſe two, madam, 'are the moſt conſpicuous victims of his 'perfidy;—pray Heaven you may not 'cloſe the ſad triumvirate, and that I 'may never ſee ſuch beauty, and ſuch 'goodneſs, ſtand among the foremoſt in 'the rank of thoſe many wretches he has 'made.'

'In

'In ſhort, madam, he has deceived your 'friends, and betrayed you into a miſtaken 'opinion of his honour and ſincerity: — 'if he marries you, you cannot but be 'miſerable, he being the right of another; '—if he does not marry you, your repu-'tation ſuffers. — Happy is it for you, if 'the loſs of reputation is all you will have 'to regret;—he already boaſts of having 'received favours from you, which, who-'ever looks in your face will find it very 'difficult to think you capable of grant-'ing;—but yet, who knows what ſtrange 'effects too great a ſhare of tenderneſs 'in the compoſition may not have pro-'duced?

'Fly then, madam, from this deſtruc-'tive town, and the worſt monſter in it, 'Trueworth: — Retire in time to thoſe 'peaceful ſhades from whence you came, '—and ſave what yet remains of you 'worthy your attention to preſerve.

'Whatever reports to your prejudice, 'the vanity of your injurious deceiver 'may have made him give out, among 'his looſe companions, I ſtill hope your 'virtue has hitherto protected you, and 'that this warning will not come too late 'to keep you from ever verifying them.

'Be aſſured, madam, that in giving this 'account, I am inſtigated by no other mo- 'tive than merely my love of virtue, and 'deteſtation of all who would endeavour 'to corrupt it, and that I am,

'With perfect ſincerity,

'MADAM,

'Your well-wiſher,

'And humble ſervant,

'UNKNOWN.'

Miſs Flora, on conſidering what ſhe had wrote, began to think ſhe had expreſſed herſelf in ſomewhat too warm a manner; — but ſhe let it paſs on this account:—'By the virulence, ſaid ſhe, with 'which I have ſpoke of Trueworth, his 'adored Miſs Harriot will certainly ima- 'gine it comes from one of thoſe unhappy 'creatures I have repreſented in it;—and 'if ſo, it will gain the more credit with 'her;—if ſhe ſuppoſes that rage and de- 'ſpair has dictated ſome groundleſs accu- 'ſations againſt her love, ſhe nevertheleſs 'will believe others to be fact, and that 'at leaſt he has been falſe to one.'

She

She therefore went to the perſon, who was always her ſecretary in affairs of this nature, and having got it copied, was going to the poſt-houſe, in order to ſend it away; for ſhe never truſted any perſon but herſelf with theſe diſpatches.

She was within three or four yards of the poſt-houſe, when ſhe ſaw Mr. Trueworth at ſome diſtance, on the other ſide of the ſtreet: — her heart fluttered at this unexpected ſight of him; — ſhe had no power to refrain ſpeaking to him;—ſhe ſtayed not to put her letter in, but flew directly croſs the way, and met him juſt as he was turning the corner of another ſtreet.

'Oh, Mr. Trueworth, cried ſhe, as 'they drew near each other, I have pray-'ed that I might live once more to ſee 'you, and Heaven has granted my pe-'tition.'

'I hope, madam, ſaid he, that Heaven 'will always be equally propitious to your 'deſires in things of greater moment.' '—' There can ſcarce be any of greater 'moment, anſwered ſhe; — for at pre-'ſent I have a requeſt to make you of 'the utmoſt importance to me, though

'no more than I am certain you would 'readily grant to any one you had the 'leaſt acquaintance with; — but, conti- 'nued ſhe, this is no proper place for us 'to diſcourſe in, —— upon the terms we 'now are, it can be no breach of faith 'to the miſtreſs of your vows, to ſtep 'with me for three minutes where we 'may not be expoſed to the view of every 'paſſenger.'

Mr. Trueworth had not been very well pleaſed with the rencounter, and would gladly have diſpenſed with complying with her invitation, but thought after what ſhe had ſaid, he could not refuſe, without being guilty of a rudeneſs unbecoming of himſelf, as well as cruel to her; yet did he comply in ſuch a manner as might make her ſee, his inclination had little part in his conſent; — he told her, he was in very great haſte, but would ſnatch as much time as ſhe mentioned from the buſineſs he was upon.— Nothing more was ſaid, and they went together into the neareſt tavern, where being ſeated, and wine brought in, — 'Now, madam,' ſaid he, with a cold civility, 'pleaſe to favour me with your 'commands.'

'Alas!'

'Alas!' replied ſhe, 'it belongs not 'to me to command, and my requeſt 'you have already granted.' — 'What 'without knowing it,' cried he?— Yes,' reſumed ſhe, 'I thought an intimacy ſuch 'as ours has been, ought not to have 'been broke off without a kind farewel. '—I blame you not for marrying; — 'yet ſure I deſerve not to be quite for-'ſaken, — utterly thrown off; — you 'might at leaſt have flattered me with 'the hope, that in ſpite of your matri-'monial engagement, you would ſtill re-'tain ſome ſparks of affection for your 'poor Flora.' — 'Be aſſured,' ſaid he, 'I ſhall always think on you with tender-'neſs' — 'And can you then reſolve ne-'ver to ſee me more?' rejoined ſhe paſ-ſionately: — 'I hoped,' replied he, 'that 'you had acquieſced in the reaſons I gave 'for that reſolution.' — 'I hoped ſo too, ſaid ſhe, 'and made uſe of my utmoſt 'efforts for that purpoſe; — but 'tis in 'vain, — I found I could not live with-'out you, and only wiſhed an opportu-'nity to take one laſt embrace before I 'leave the world and you for ever.' — In ſpeaking theſe words ſhe threw herſelf upon his neck, and burſt into a flood of tears.

How impoſſible was it for a heart, ſuch as Mr. Trueworth's, to be unmoved at a ſpectacle like this; — her love, — her grief, and her deſpair ſhot through his very ſoul; —— ſcarce could he refrain mingling his tears with her's: — 'My 'dear Flora, cried he, compoſe yourſelf, by 'Heaven I cannot bear to ſee you thus.' —He kiſſed her cheek while he was ſpeaking, — ſeated her in a chair, and held her hand in his, with the extremeſt tenderneſs.

This wicked creature was not ſo overcome with the emotions of her love and grief, as not to ſee the pity ſhe had raiſed in him, and flattering herſelf, that there was in it ſome mixture of a paſſion, ſhe more wiſhed to inſpire, fell a ſecond time upon his boſom, crying, — 'Oh, True-'worth!—Trueworth!—here let me die, 'for death has nothing in it ſo terrible as 'the being ſeparated from you.'

Mr. Trueworth was a man of ſtrict honour, — great reſolution, and paſſionately devoted to the moſt deſerving of her ſex;—yet he was ſtill a man,—— was of an amorous complection, and thus tempted, who can anſwer, but in this unguarded moment he might have been guilty of a wrong

a wrong to his dear Harriot, for which he would afterwards have hated himſelf, if an accident of more ſervice to him than his own virtue, in ſo critical a juncture, had not prevented him?

He returned the embrace ſhe gave, and joined his lips to her's, with a warmth which ſhe had not for a long time experienced from him, a ſudden ruſh of tranſport came at once upon her, with ſuch force, that it overwhelmed her ſpirits, and ſhe fell into a kind of fainting between his arms; he was frightened at the change he obſerved in her, and haſtily cutting the lacings of her ſtays to give her air, the letter above-mentioned dropped from her breaſt upon the ground: — he took it up, and was going to throw it upon the table, but in that action ſeeing the name of Miſs Harriot on the ſuperſcription, was ſtruck with an aſtoniſhment not eaſy to be conceived; — he no longer thought of the condition Miſs Flora was in, but tearing open the letter he began to examine the contents.

Miſs Flora in that inſtant recovering her ſenſes, and the remembrance of what had been concealed in her boſom, flew to him, endeavouring to ſnatch the paper from his hands, but he had already ſeen too much

not to be determined to ſee the reſt.—'Stand off!' cried he, in a voice half choaked with fury, —'I am not yet fully 'acquainted with the whole of the favours 'you have beſtowed upon me in this 'paper.'—Confounded as ſhe was, cunning did not quite forſake her, —'I am 'ignorant of what it contains, ſaid ſhe; '—I found it in the ſtreet.—It is not 'mine,—I wrote it not.'

With ſuch like vain pretences would ſhe have pleaded innocence, yet all the time endeavoured with her whole ſtrength, to force the proof of her guilt from him, inſomuch, that though he was very tall, he was obliged with one hand to keep her off, and with the other hold the paper at arms length, while he was reading it, could not forbear frequently interrupting himſelf, to caſt a look full of contempt and rage, on the malicious authoreſs, —'Vile hypo-'crite!' cried he; and then again, as he got farther into the baſe invective, —'Thou fiend in female form!'

She now finding all was over, and ſeized with a ſudden fit of frenzy, or ſomething like it, ran to his ſword, which he had pulled off, and laid in the window, and was about to plunge it in her breaſt;—he eaſily wreſted it from her, and put-

ting

ting it by his ſide, 'O thou ſerpent! — 'thou viper!' cried he, — 'if thou wert 'a man, thou ſhould'ſt not need to be thy 'own executioner.' —— The tide of her paſſion then turning another way, ſhe threw herſelf at his feet, — clung round his legs, and in a voice rather ſcreaming than ſpeaking, uttered theſe words: 'O! 'pardon me! — pity me! — whatever I 'have done my love of you occaſioned it.' '— Curſe on ſuch poiſonous love,' rejoined he: — 'Hell, and its worſt effects, 'are in the name, when mentioned by a 'mouth like thine.' — Then finding it a little difficult to diſentangle himſelf from the hold ſhe had taken of him, — 'Thou 'ſhame and ſcandal to that ſex, to which 'alone thou oweſt thy ſafety,' cried he, furiouſly, 'quit me this inſtant, leſt I 'forget thou art a woman, — leſt I ſpurn 'thee from me, and uſe thee as the worſt 'of reptiles.'

On hearing theſe dreadful words, all her ſtrength forſook her; the ſinews of her hand relaxed, and loſt their graſp :— ſhe fell a ſecond time into a fainting fit. but of a nature as different from what the former had been, as were the emotions that occaſioned it;—Mr. Trueworth was now too much and too juſtly irritated to be capable of relenting; — he left her in

this condition; and only bid the people at the bar, as he went out of the houſe, ſend ſomebody up to her aſſiſtance.

The humour he was at preſent in, rendering him altogether unfit for company, he went directly to his lodgings, where examining the letter with more attention than he could do before, he preſently imagined, he was not altogether unacquainted with the hand-writing, —— he very well knew it was not that of Miſs Flora, yet poſitive that he had ſomewhere ſeen it before; that which he had received, concerning Miſs Betſy, and the child at Denham, came freſh into his head: —he found them, indeed, the ſame on comparing, and, as the reader may ſuppoſe, this diſcovery added not a little to the reſentment he was before inflamed with, againſt the baſe inventreſs of theſe double falſhoods.

CHAP. XX.

Contains divers things.

MISS Betſy was all this time enjoying the little fraud ſhe had been guilty of: — the idea how Mr. Trueworth would be ſurpriſed at finding his picture had been taken away, and the various conjectures that would naturally riſe in his mind, upon ſo odd an accident, gave her more real pleaſure than others feel on the accompliſhment of the moſt material event.

She was, indeed, of a humour, the moſt perfectly happy for herſelf that could be; — chearful, — gay, — not apt to create imaginary ills, as too many do, and become wretched for misfortunes which have no exiſtence, but in their own fretful diſpoſitions. — On any real cauſe, either for grief or anger, that happened to her, no body, it is certain, felt them with a more poignant ſenſibility; but then ſhe was effected with them but for a ſhort time. — The turbulent paſſion could obtain no reſidence in her mind, and on the firſt approaches of their oppoſite emotions entirely

tirely vaniſhed, as if they had never been, —The arrows of affliction, of what kind ſoever they were, but ſlightly glanced upon her heart, nor pierced it, much leſs were able to make any laſting impreſſion there.

She now viſited as uſual,—ſaw as much company as ever, and hearing no mention made, wherever ſhe went, of her adventure with the mock baronet, concluded the whole thing was, and would remain, an eternal ſecret, and therefore eaſily forgot it; or, if it came into her head, remembered it only on account of her deliverer.

She was now on exceeding good terms with her brothers, who were full of ſpirits themſelves: —the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs, who loved play but too well, had lately had ſome lucky caſts, and Mr. Francis had accompliſhed his affairs,— his commiſſion was ſigned, and every thing contributed to render the whole family perfectly eaſy in themſelves, and obliging to each other.

In the midſt of this contentment of mind, Mr. Edward Goodman came to town from Deal;—the two Mr. Thoughtleſſes, on account of the many obligations they had to his uncle, and the good character

character they had heard of himſelf, received him with abundance of reſpect and affection.

This young Indian had a great deal of the honeſt ſimplicity of his uncle, both in his countenance and behaviour, and wanted not politeneſs and good manners ſufficient to render his converſation very agreeable.

He was ſent from Bengal at about four years of age, and received the firſt rudiments of his education at one of the beſt ſchools in England, where he continued 'till he had attained to his nineteenth, and then returned to his native country, and was now about twenty-four.

Mr. Thoughtleſs had now got ſo much the better of his miſtreſs, as to prevail on her, to content herſelf with keeping in her own apartment, whenever he had any company, by whom it was improper for her to be ſeen.

He made a handſome entertainment for Mr. Goodman, ſoon after his arrival, to which the lawyer, who had the care of his affairs, with his wife, a well bred, diſcreet woman, was alſo invited;—Miſs Betſy

Betſy, at the requeſt of her brother, preſided at the head of the table.

Dinner was ordered to be ready about three, and the invitation accordingly made; but the lawyer not coming, his wife, perceiving they waited for him, was a little perplexed; but ſhe was ſoon eaſed of it, by his coming in leſs than a quarter of an hour after the time he was expected.

This gentleman was the very perſon who made Mrs. Blanchfield's will, and to apologize for his ſtay, he related to them the cauſe that had detained him, which was, that a demur being made to the payment of ſome part of the money bequeathed by that lady to Mr. Trueworth, he had been obliged to go with him, in order to rectify the miſtake which had occaſioned it. — In giving this account he imagined not, that any perſon preſent had the leaſt concern in it, or even were acquainted with either of the parties he mentioned.

Miſs Betſy ſaid nothing, but had her own reflections on what he had been ſaying; — ſhe, however, had the ſatisfaction of hearing her two brothers aſk thoſe queſtions ſhe longed to put to him herſelf.—By the anſwers he made, ſhe doubted

ed not, but the deceaſed had been courted by Mr. Trueworth,—had loved him, and was to have been married to him, by her having made him ſo conſiderable a legacy.

The reſt of their converſation that whole day, was chiefly on matters concerning the late Mr. Goodman,—the baſeneſs of Lady Mellaſin, and the meaſures that were taking to detect the fraud ſhe had been guilty of; —all which was very dry and inſipid to Miſs Betſy at this time, as indeed it would have been, had it turned on any other ſubject —She was not, therefore, very ſorry when the company broke up, that ſhe might be at home, and at full liberty to indulge meditations, which promiſed her more ſatisfaction than any thing ſhe could hear abroad.

She had ſet it down in her mind, from what the lawyer had ſaid, as a ſure fact, that Mr. Trueworth, ſince his deſiſting his courtſhip to her, had loved another, and alſo, that her rival in his affection was now no more.—'He need not,' ſaid ſhe to herſelf, 'be at the trouble of ſit-'ting a ſecond time for his picture, in 'compliment to her; nor can what I have 'done be a ſubject of diſquiet to either of 'them.'

She

She then would take his picture out of the cabinet, where ſhe had concealed it, and examine it attentively: —— 'Good 'God! cried ſhe, how uncertain is the 'heart of man!—How little dependance 'ought we to place on all the profeſſions 'of love they make us? — Juſt ſo he 'looked, — with all this tenderneſs in his 'eyes, when his falſe tongue proteſted 'he never could think of marrying any 'woman but myſelf.' — But theſe uneaſy, and indeed unjuſt, reflections laſted not above a minute: — 'Mrs. Blanchfield,' ſaid ſhe, 'had a large fortune;—it was 'that perhaps he was in love with, and 'finding no hope of gaining me, he 'might be tempted by his ambition to 'make his addreſſes to her: — but what-'ever were his thoughts on her account, 'ſhe is now dead; — and who knows 'what may happen? — that he once 'loved me is certain; — if he ſhould re-'turn to his firſt vows, the obligation I 'have received from him would not per-'mit me to treat him with the ſame in-'difference I have done, — I am not in 'love with any man, continued ſhe; 'but, if I ever marry, he certainly, ex-'cluſive of what he has done for me, de-'ſerves in every reſpect to have the pre-'ference, and I ſhould with leſs regret

'ſubmit

'ſubmit to the yoke of wedlock with him,
'than any other I have ſeen.'

Thus ſhe went on, forming ideal proſpects all that night, and part of the enſuing day, when the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs came, and gave her the moſt unwelcome interruption ſhe could receive.

He told her, that he had juſt received an account, to his entire ſatisfaction in every thing, relating to Mr. Munden, and that no reaſonable objection could be, made, either as to the family,—the eſtate or the character of that gentleman; —— 'Therefore, ſaid he, as you have thought 'fit to encourage his pretenſions, and he 'has continued them a ſufficient length of 'time, to defend you from the cenſure of 'a too quick conſent, you cannot, I think, 'in honour, but reward his paſſion with-'out delay.'

Miſs Betſy was, at preſent, in a diſpoſition very unfit to comply with her brother's advice; but after all that had been urged by him, and by Mr. Francis, ſhe could not aſſume courage wholly to refuſe.

She heſitated, — ſhe began a ſentence without ending it, — and when ſhe did, her

her anſwers were not all of a piece with that ready wit which ſhe had always teſtified on other occaſions.

Mr. Thoughtleſs perceiving ſhe was rather ſtudious to evade giving any determinate anſwer, than willing to give ſuch a one as he deſired ſhe ſhould, began to expoſtulate with her on the capriciouſneſs of her humour and behaviour,—he conjured her to reflect on her late adventure with the impoſtor, Sir Frederick Fineer; and how ill it became her to countenance the addreſſes of a wretch like him, and at the ſame time trifle with a man of fortune and reputation.

She ſuffered him to go on in this manner for a conſiderable time, without giving him the leaſt interruption, but by degrees recovering her ſpirits, — 'I ſhall 'take care, ſir, ſaid ſhe, never to fall 'into the like adventure again, neither 'do I intend to trifle with Mr. Munden; 'but marriage is a thing of too ſerious a 'nature to hurry into, without firſt having made trial of the conſtancy of the 'man who would be a huſband, and alſo 'of being well aſſured of one's own 'heart.'

Mr.

Mr. Thoughtleſs then told her, with ſome warmth, that he found ſhe was relapſing into a humour, and way of thinking, which could not in the end but bring ruin on herſelf, and diſgrace to all her family; and added, that for his part he ſhould intermeddle no more in her affairs. The tender ſoul of Miſs Betſy was deeply affected at theſe words: — ſhe loved her brothers, and could not bear their diſpleaſure;—the thought of having any diſagreement with them was dreadful to her, yet the putting a conſtraint on her inclinations to oblige them was no leſs ſo. — In this dilemma, whether ſhe complied, or whether ſhe refuſed, ſhe found herſelf equally unhappy.

One moment ſhe was opening her mouth to yield a ready aſſent to all that was requeſted of her, on the ſcore of Mr. Munden; — the next to confeſs, that ſhe neither liked, nor loved that gentleman, and knew not whether ſhe ſhould ever be able to reſolve on a marriage with him, but her ſincerity forbad the one, and her fears of offending gave a check to the other, and both together kept her entirely ſilent.

'You ought, methinks, however,' resumed Mr. Thoughtleſs, 'to have ſpared 'Mr. Munden the trouble of laying open 'his circumſtances, and me that of ex-'amining into them.' — 'I ſhould un-'doubtedly have done ſo, ſir,' anſwered ſhe, 'if I had been entirely averſe to the 'propoſals of Mr. Munden; therefore both 'you and he are too haſty in judging. — 'You know, brother, that Sir Ralph, and 'my dear Lady Truſty, will be in town 'in a very few days, and I am willing to 'have the approbation of as many of my 'friends as poſſible, in a thing of ſo much 'conſequence to my future peace.'

Mr. Thoughtleſs was now ſomewhat better ſatisfied than he had been, and after recommending to her a conſtancy of mind and reſolution, took his leave of her.

This converſation having a little diſſipated thoſe gay imaginations ſhe was before poſſeſſed of, ſhe began to conſider ſeriouſly, what ſhe meant by all this, and what it availed her to give both her lover and brothers ſo much matter of complaint againſt her: ſhe reflected, that ſhe had now gone ſo far with that gentleman, that neither honour towards him, nor regard to her own reputation, would well ſuffer her

her to go back: — 'Since it is ſo then,' ſaid ſhe to herſelf, 'to what end do I 'take all this trouble to invent excuſes 'for delaying what muſt one day neceſ-'ſarily be?'

'Yet wherefore muſt it be?' continued ſhe, 'I have made no promiſe, and if a 'better offer ſhould happen, I ſee no rea-'ſon that obliges me to reject it: --- for 'example, — if Mr. Trueworth, or ſuch 'a one as Mr. Trueworth, if his equal is 'to be found in nature, neither my bro-'thers, nor the world, I fancy, would 'condemn me for quitting Mr. Munden.'

'Why then, cried ſhe, need I make all 'this haſte to put myſelf out of the way 'of fortune? — I am young enough, ---- 'have loſt no part of what has attracted 'me ſo many admirers; and while my 'heart and hand are free, have, at leaſt, 'a chance of being more happy than Mr. 'Munden can make me.'

In a word, being fully perſwaded in her mind, that the lady, who had ſupplanted her in Mr. Trueworth's affection, was dead, ſhe imagined there was a proba-bility he might renew his addreſſes to herſelf; — ſhe wiſhed, at leaſt, to make the experiment, and to that end reſolved

to

to give no promiſe to Mr. Munden; ---- yet would ſhe not allow herſelf to think ſhe loved the other, but only that ſhe would give him the preference, as he was a match of more advantage.

Nothing is more certain, nor, I believe, more obvious to the reader, than that this young lady, almoſt from the time of Mr. Trueworth's quitting her, had entertained a growing inclination for him, which the late ſervice he had rendered her had very much increaſed; — but this her pride would not ſuffer her to own, even to herſelf, as the comic poet truly ſays,

For whatſoe'er the ſages charge on pride,
The angels fall, and twenty faults beſide,
On earth 'tis ſure, 'mong us of mortal calling,
Pride ſaves man oft, and woman too, from falling.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Preſents the reader with ſome prognoſtics on events in futuro.

THE reader will eaſily ſuppoſe, that in the preſent diſpoſition of Miſs Betſy's heart, Mr. Munden met with but an indifferent reception from her; — ſhe avoided his company as much as poſſible, and when obliged to receive a viſit from him, could not bring herſelf to treat him with any thing more than a cold civility. —He complained of her cruelty, ---- told her, he had expected better things from her, after her brothers had approved his flame; ---- he preſſed her in the moſt pathetic terms he was maſter of, to let him know when the happy day would arrive, which ſhould put an end to the long ſeries of his hopes and fears.

It is certain, that if this gentleman had loved with that warmth and ſincerity which ſome men have done, he muſt have been very unhappy during his courtſhip to Miſs Betſy; —— but he was altogether inſenſible of the delicacies of the paſſion he profeſſed, — he felt not the

pains he affected to languiſh under,—he could ſupport the frowns, or even the ſlights of his miſtreſs, without any other anxiety than what his pride inflicted.

It was, therefore, rather owing to this laſt propenſity in his nature, than any emotions of a real tenderneſs for Miſs Betſy, which had made him perſevere in his addreſſes to her.—All his acquaintance knew he had courted her a long time; — ſome of them had been witneſs of her treatment of him, and he was unwilling it ſhould be ſaid of him, that he had made an offer of his heart in vain.

He had, at firſt, indeed, a liking of her perſon; — he had conſidered her beauty, wit, and the many accompliſhments ſhe was poſſeſſed of, were ſuch as would render his choice applauded by the world.—The hopes of gaining her in a ſhort time, by the encouragement ſhe had given his addreſſes, had made him purſue her with vigour; but the delays, — the ſcruples, the capriciouſneſs of her humour, — the pretences ſhe of late had made to avoid giving him a definitive anſwer, had, at length, palled all the inclination he once had for her, and even deſire was deadened in him, on ſo many diſappointments.

It

It is, therefore, a very ill-judged thing in the ladies, to keep too long in play the man they ever deſign to marry; and with all due deference to that great wit and poet, Sir John Suckling, there are very few examples, which verify his maxim, that

'"'Tis expectation makes the bleſſing dear."

According to my opinion, which is founded on obſervation, another author, who wrote much about the ſame time with Sir John, has given us a more true idea of what a tedious courtſhip may produce, eſpecially on the ſide of the man: —in a matrimonial dialogue, he makes the huſband excuſe the coldneſs complained of by his wife, in theſe terms:

'Unequal lengths, alas! our paſſions run,
'My love was quite worn out, e'er your's begun.'

This being the caſe with Mr. Munden, it rendered Miſs Betſy little leſs indifferent to him, in reality, than he had ever been to her: — to which another motive, perhaps, might alſo be added, viz. that of his indulging himſelf with amuſements with other fair ones, of a more kind complexion, for continency, as will hereafter

appear, was not among the number of that gentleman's virtues.

But enough of Mr. Munden for the preſent.—It is now highly proper to give the reader ſome account what Mr. Trueworth was doing, while Miſs Betſy was entertaining ſentiments for him, which he had long ſince ceaſed the ambition of inſpiring her with.

Difficult was it for him to get over the mingled aſtoniſhment and vexation, which the detection of the wickedneſs of Miſs Flora had involved him in. — The remembrance of thoſe guilty moments, in which he had indulged a tender intercourſe with a woman of her abandoned principles, filled him with the moſt bitter remorſe, and rendered him almoſt hateful to himſelf,

To recollect, that he had been the inſtrument of her baſe deſigns on Miſs Betſy, and how cruelly he had wronged that lady, by a too raſh belief, was, of itſelf, ſufficient to inflame his rage; but when he reflected on this laſt act of baſeneſs, which, if not providentially diſcovered, might have made his dear Harriot entertain ſuſpicions of him, fatal to her peace, if not totally deſtructive of their mutual happineſs, the ſhock of ſuch a misfortune, though

though happily fruſtrated, was more than he could bear with any tolerable degree of patience.

Rage, diſdain, and revenge, for the vile contriver of ſo black an attempt, were the firſt emotions that took poſſeſſion of his mind; but the violence of thoſe paſſions evaporating by degrees, he began to think more coolly, and to reaſon with himſelf, from which that depravity of morals and manners, women are ſometimes guilty of, proceeded.

'Chaſtity, ſaid he, is but one branch 'of virtue, but a material one, and ſerves 'as a guard to all the others, and if that 'is once overcome, endangers the giving 'entrance to a thouſand vices —A woman 'entirely free from thoſe inordinate deſires, 'which are indeed but the diſgrace of love, 'can ſcarce be capable of envy, malice, 'or revenge to any exceſs.

'That ſex, cried he again, are endued 'by nature with many perfections, which 'our's cannot boaſt of, — it is their own 'faults when they ſink beneath us in 'value; — but the beſt things, when 'once corrupted, become the worſt. — 'How dear, therefore, ought a woman 'to prize her innocence!' — as Shake-'ſpear ſays,

——— 'They all are white,— a ſheet
'Of ſpotleſs paper, when they firſt are born;
'But they are to be ſcrawl'd upon, and blotted
'By every gooſe-quill.'———

He was in the midſt of theſe contemplations, when a letter from Miſs Flora was brought to him; — ſhe ſtill flattered herſelf with being able to work on his good-nature by ſubmiſſions, and a ſeeming contrition for what ſhe had done, and had accordingly wrote in the moſt moving terms ſhe was miſtreſs of; —— but he knowing, by the hand-writing on the ſuperſcription, from whom it came, would not even open it, and his indignation rekindling afreſh, he took a piece of paper, in which he wrote only this line,

'I read no letters from incendiaries.'

This ſerved as a cover to the letter, which he ſent back directly by the meſſenger that brought it.

If the mind of Mr. Trueworth had been leſs taken up than it was at preſent, this ugly accident would, doubtleſs, have dwelt much longer upon it; — but affairs of a more important, and more pleaſing nature, demanded his whole attention.

The

The day prefixed for the celebration of his marriage with Miſs Harriot, and alſo of that of Sir Bazil and Miſs Mabel, had been delayed on account of Mrs. Blanchfield's death. — None of theſe generous perſons could think of indulging the joys they ſo much languiſhed for, 'till all due rites were paid to the memory of that amiable lady.

Mr. Trueworth and Miſs Harriot went into deep mourning:—Sir Bazil and Mrs. Wellair alſo put on black; — Miſs Mabel did the ſame in compliment to them; for ſhe had not the leaſt acquaintance with the deceaſed.

Nor was this all: — Mr. Trueworth, to teſtify his gratitude and reſpect, ordered a very curious monument of white marble to be erected over her remains, the model of which he drew himſelf, after one he had ſeen in Italy, and was much admired by all judges of architecture and ſculpture.

If, by a ſecret and unfathomable intuition, the ſouls of the departed are permitted any knowledge of what is done below, that of Mrs. Blanchfield's muſt feel an extreme ſatisfaction, in ſuch proofs of the eſteem of him ſhe had ſo tenderly and

ſo fatally loved, as well as thoſe of her fair friend and rival.

That generous young lady would fain have prolonged their mourning for a whole month, and conſequently have put off her marriage 'till that time; but this, if Mr. Trueworth would have been prevailed upon to have ſubmitted to, Sir Bazil and Mrs. Wellair would not agree to; — he thought he had already ſacrificed enough of the time of his promiſed happineſs, and Mrs. Wellair was impatient to get home, though equally loth to leave her ſiſter, 'till ſhe had diſpoſed of herſelf.

They were arguing on this topick one evening: — Mr. Trueworth oppoſed Miſs Harriot, as much as he durſt do without danger of offending her; but Sir Bazil plainly told her, that if ſhe continued obſtinate, Miſs Mabel and he would finiſh their affairs without her. — Mrs. Wellair urged the neceſſity there was for her return, and Mr. Trueworth, encouraged by what theſe two had ſaid, added, that he was certain Mrs. Blanchfield did not mean, by what ſhe had done, to obſtruct his happineſs a moment: — to which Miſs Harriot, with a moſt obliging ſmile, replied, 'Well, cried ſhe, obedience will 'very ſhortly be my duty, and I will

'give

'give you a ſample of it before-hand.—'here is my hand,' continued ſhe, giving it to him, 'make it your own as ſoon as 'you pleaſe.'

It is not to be doubted but Mr. Trueworth kiſſed the hand ſhe gave him, with the utmoſt warmth and tenderneſs; but before he could make any reply to ſo kind a declaration, Sir Bazil cried out,——— 'Well ſaid, Harriot,—love has already 'wrought wonders in your heart;—you 'will grant to a lover what you refuſe to 'us.'—'Not to a lover, ſir, anſwered ſhe, 'but to a perſon who is about to be my 'huſband.----I think it is as ill judged a 'reſerve in a woman to diſown her affec-'tion for the man ſhe has conſented to 'marry, as it would be imprudence to 'confeſs it before ſhe has conſented.'

After ſome farther converſation on this head, in the courſe of which Mr. Trueworth had the opportunity of being more confirmed than ever, that the diſpoſition of his miſtreſs was, in every reſpect, ſuch as he wiſhed to find it;—all that was yet wanting for the completion of the nuptials was ſettled.

The ſecond day after this was fixed for the celebration of the ceremony; after which it was determined, that the two

bridegrooms with their brides, — the father of Miſs Mabel, Mrs. Wellair, and two other friends, ſhould all ſet out together for Sir Bazil's ſeat in Staffordſhire, and that Mrs. Wellair ſhould write to her husband to meet them there, that the whole family might be together on ſo joyful an occaſion.

CHAP. XXII.

Will prove, by a remarkable inſtance of a high-raiſed hope ſuddenly diſappointed, the extreme weakneſs of building our expectations upon mere conjecture.

THOUGH it is not to be imagined, that the preparations for marriages, ſuch as thoſe of Sir Bazil Loveit, and Mr. Trueworth, could be an entire ſecret to the town, eſpecially as neither of the parties had any motive to induce them to deſire it ſhould be ſo; yet Miſs Betſy never heard the leaſt ſyllable of any ſuch thing being in agitation.—Thoſe of her acquaintance, whom ſhe at preſent chiefly converſed with, were either ignorant of it themſelves, or had never happened to mention it in her preſence; ſo that knowing

ing nothing of Mr. Trueworth's affairs of late, more than what the lawyer had caſually related at her brother's, it is not to be wondered at, that ſhe imagined him wholly diſengaged, ſince the death of that lady, who had ſo kindly remembered him in her will.

Neither ought it (her vanity conſidered) to appear ſtrange, that ſhe was apt to flatter herſelf with a belief of the return of his affection to herſelf, when the memory of the late object of it ſhould be utterly eraſed.

When there is the leaſt probability that what we ardently wiſh may come to paſs, the minuteſt circumſtance, in favour of our hopes, ſerves to aſſure us, that it certainly will do ſo.

Miſs Betſy was going to make a viſit at Whitehall; but in croſſing the park happened to meet the two Miſs Airiſhes, who aſked her to take a turn with them: —— to which ſhe replied, that ſhe would gladly accompany them, but had ſent word to a lady that ſhe was coming to paſs the whole evening with her. — 'Nay, ſaid the elder Miſs Airiſh, 'we have an en-'gagement too at our own apartment, 'and can ſtay only to walk once up the 'Mall, and down again.' — Miſs. Betſy

replied, that would be no great loſs of time, and ſo went with them.—They had not proceeded many yards in their promenade, before Miſs Betſy ſaw Mr. Trueworth, with Sir Bazil, coming directly towards them.—The gentlemen bowed to her as they approached more near. — A ſudden thought that moment ſtarting into Miſs Betſy's head, ſhe dropped her fan, as if by accident, as they were paſſing each other, juſt at Mr. Trueworth's feet: —he ſtopped haſtily to take it up, and preſented it haſtily to her:—'I am ſorry, 'ſir, ſaid ſhe, to give you this trouble.' —'Whatever ſervices, madam, are in 'my power, replied he, will be always a pleaſure to myſelf.'—No more was ſaid; —the gentlemen and the ladies purſued their different routs. — This little adventure, however, had a prodigious effect on Miſs Betſy: — ſhe thought ſhe ſaw ſomething ſo gay and ſparkling in the eyes of Mr. Trueworth, as denoted his mourning habit belied his heart, and that he was not much affected with the death of her, for whom decency and gratitude had obliged him to put it on.

After the gentlemen were out of hearing, the two Miſs Airiſhes began to give their judgments upon them: — the one cried, they were both very pretty fellows; but

but the other accuſed them of want of politeneſs: — As they ſaw we had no man with us, ſaid ſhe, 'they might, me-'thinks, have offered their ſervice to gal-'lant us, eſpecially as one of them ſeems 'to be acquainted with Miſs Betſy.' — But that young lady little regarded what was ſaid on the occaſion, being too much taken up with her own cogitations; — ſhe repeated internally the words of Mr. Trueworth, and as ſhe was perſuaded he was now at liberty to offer her all manner of ſervices, ſhe interpreted, that by 'whatever ſervices, were in his power,' he meant to renew his ſervices to her as a lover.—This imagination elated her to a very high degree, but hindered her from holding any converſation with the two ladies ſhe was with, as it was improper for her to ſay any thing on the ſubject, which ſo much engroſſed her thoughts. They all walked together up to Buckingham-houſe, then turned back, and the two Miſs Airiſhes took leave of her at St. James's,—they went into the palace, and ſhe was proceeding towards Spring-garden, when ſhe at a diſtance perceived Sir Bazil Loveit, Mr. Trueworth, Miſs Mabel, and two ladies, whoſe faces ſhe was entirely unacquainted with.

The reader will not be at a loſs to gueſs

gueſs, that theſe two were no other than Mrs. Wellair and Miſs Harriot: — they had been that afternoon to take leave of ſome friends, on their going out of town, and had appointed to meet the gentlemen in the Mall; — in their way thither, they had called upon Miſs Mabel, and brought her with them. — This little troop being all in the ſame ſable livery, ſeemed ſo much of a family, as threw Miſs Betſy into ſome ſort of ſurprize; — ſhe knew not that Miſs Mabel had the leaſt acquaintance with Sir Bazil, nor even any more with Mr. Trueworth, than having ſeen him a few times in her company. — As they drew nearer, ſhe made a motion to Miſs Mabel, as if ſhe was deſirous of ſpeaking to her —upon which that lady advanced towards her with theſe words: 'I am ſorry, madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'as you 'are alone, that it is improper for me to 'aſk you to join us.' — 'I am very glad, 'madam, you do not,' replied Miſs Betſy, very much picqued, 'becauſe I ſhould be 'obliged to refuſe you.' — She no ſooner uttered theſe words than ſhe paſſed haſtily on, and Miſs Mabel returned to her company, who waited for her at ſome paces diſtance.

It muſt be acknowledged, that Miſs Betſy had cauſe to be alarmed at a ſpeech

ſpeech of this nature, from a lady of Miſs Mabel's politeneſs and good humour;—ſhe thought there muſt be ſome very powerful reaſons, which had obliged her to make it; and what thoſe reaſons could be, ſeemed at preſent an impenetrable ſecret. — She was too much diſconcerted to be able to paſs the whole evening, as ſhe had promiſed the lady ſhe went to ſhe would do; — ſhe, therefore, pretended a ſudden indiſpoſition, took her leave, and went home, in order to be at full liberty to ruminate on what had paſſed in the park.

She had not been many minutes in her own apartment, before ſhe was interrupted in her meditations, by the coming of her two brothers.—Several buſtos, pictures, pieces of old china, and other curioſities, belonging to a nobleman, lately deceaſed, being to be expoſed to ſale, the elder Mr. Thoughtleſs had an inclination to become a purchaſer of ſuch of them as he ſhould find agreeable to his fancy, but was willing to have his ſiſter's judgment in the matter; and it was to engage her to go with him the next morning about twelve o'clock, when the goods were to be exhibited to public view, that had occaſioned him and Mr. Francis to make her this viſit.—It is not to be doubted, but that ſhe was willing to oblige him in that point,

point; — ſhe aſſured him, ſhe would be ready againſt he came to call on her.

When ſhe was alone, ſhe began to run over in her mind, all the particulars of what had paſſed that evening in the park, and found ſomething very extraordinary on the whole. — It had ſeemed extremely odd to her, that Mr. Trueworth and Sir Bazil did not join her, and the two Miſs Airiſhes; but then ſhe thought ſhe could eaſily account for their not doing ſo, and that Mr. Trueworth did not chuſe to enter into any converſation with her, becauſe Sir Bazil had happened to ſee her at Miſs Forward's, and might poſſibly have entertained no favourable idea of her on that ſcore: — ſhe, therefore, with a great deal of readineſs excuſed Mr. Trueworth for this omiſſion, eſpecially as ſhe was poſſeſſed of the fancy, that the compliment with which he returned her fan, and the look he aſſumed during that action, ſeemed to tell her, he wiſhed for an opportunity of adding ſomething more tender.—But when ſhe came to conſider on the ſecond meeting, ſhe was indeed very much at a loſs to fathom the meaning of what ſhe had ſeen; ſhe knew a thouſand accidents might have occaſioned an acquaintance between Miſs Mabel and Sir Bazil, and alſo, that the little ſhe had with Mr. Trueworth

Trueworth might have been caſually improved; but could find not the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon why that lady ſhould tell her, it was improper for to aſk her to join company with them. — Though ſhe had of late ſeen that lady leſs frequently than uſual, yet, whenever they did meet, it was with the greateſt civility and appearance of friendſhip: — ſhe had, in reality, a ſincere regard for her, and imagined the other looked upon her with the ſame, and therefore could not but believe the ſhyneſs ſhe put on in the park, when ſpeaking to her, muſt have ſome very powerful motive to occaſion it. — Suſpence was, of all things, what Miſs Betſy could leaſt bear: —ſhe reſolved to be convinced, though at the expence of that pride ſhe would not have forfeited on any other account. — 'In ſpite of the 'ill-manners ſhe has treated me with,' ſaid ſhe, 'I will go once more to her, '—ſatisfy my curioſity, as to the manner 'of her behaviour, and then never ſee 'her more.'

To be more ſure of finding her at home ſhe thought it beſt to make the viſit ſhe intended in the morning, — accordingly ſhe ſent to her brother, that being obliged to go to a lady, who had deſired to ſee her, ſhe could not wait for his coming to call

call on her, but would not fail to meet him at the place of ſale, about the hour he had mentioned. This promiſe ſhe thought it would be eaſy for her to perform, as ſhe deſigned to ſtay no longer with Miſs Mabel, than would be ſufficient to get ſome light into a thing, which at preſent gave her ſo much perplexity,

She went about eleven o'clock; but was ſtrangely ſurpriſed, on her coming to the houſe, to find all the windows ſhut up; and after the chairmen had knocked ſeveral times, the door was opened by Nanny, the little prating wench, who had lived at Mr. Goodman's. — 'Nanny! cried Miſs Betſy, 'bleſs me, do you live here?'— 'Yes, madam,' anſwered ſhe, 'I have 'lived here ever ſince my Maſter Good-'man died.' — 'I am glad of it,' returned Miſs Betſy; — but pray is your 'lady at home?' — 'O, dear madam, ſaid the girl, 'my lady! — why, madam, 'don't you know what's done to-day?— 'Not I, replied ſhe: — 'prithee what 'doſt mean?—What' done?' — 'Lord, 'madam,' ſaid Nanny, 'I wonder you 'ſhould not know it!————my lady 'is married to-day.' —'Married!' cried Miſs Betſy haſtily; — 'to whom?' — 'To one Sir Bazil Loveit, madam, replied 'the other;—and Mr. Trueworth is mar-

'ried

'ried too, to one Miſs Harriot, Sir Bazil's 'ſiſter; — my old maſter gave both the 'brides away. — I believe the ceremony 'is over by this time; — but as ſoon as it 'is, they all bowl away for Sir Bazil's 'ſeat in Staffordſhire; — they ſay there 'will be open houſe kept there, and the 'lord knows what doings. — All the 'ſervants are gone, — none but poor me 'left to look after the houſe.' — 'Mr. 'Trueworth married!' cried Miſs Betſy, in the greateſt confuſion, 'I thought his 'miſtreſs had been dead.' — 'No, no, 'madam,' ſaid Nanny; — 'you mean Mrs. 'Blanchfield, — I know all that ſtory, — 'I was told it by one that comes often 'here: — Mr. Trueworth, I aſſure you, 'never courted her: — ſhe was only in love 'with him, and on hearing his engage-'ment with Miſs Harriot, took it to heart, 'poor ſoul, and died in a few days, and 'has left him half her fortune, and a 'world of fine things to Miſs Harriot.'

She was going on with this tittle-tattle, but Miſs Betſy was ſcarce in a condition to diſtinguiſh what ſhe ſaid; — ſhe leaned her head back againſt the chair, and was almoſt fainting away. — The maid perceiving the change in her countenance, cried out, 'Lord, madam, you are not 'well, — ſhall I get you any thing? — 'but

'but now I think on it there is a bottle 'of drops my lady left behind her in the 'dreſſing-room, I'll run and fetch them.' —She was going to do as ſhe ſaid, but Miſs Betſy recovering of herſelf, called to her to ſtay, ſaying, ſhe had no occaſion for any thing. — 'Lord, madam, ſaid ſhe, 'I did not think the marriage of 'Mr. Trueworth would have been ſuch a 'trouble to you, or I would not have 'told you any thing of it. — I am ſure 'you might have had him if you would, 'I remember well enough how he fought 'for you with Mr. Staple, and how he 'followed you up and down, where ever 'you went.—For that matter, Miſs Har-'riot has but your leavings.' — 'I give 'myſelf no trouble who has him,' replied Miſs Betſy, diſdainfully, —'it is not him 'I am thinking of; —I was only a little 'ſurpriſed, that Miſs Mabel ſhould make 'ſuch a ſecret of her affairs to me.' — 'You know, madam,' ſaid Nanny, 'that 'my lady is a very cloſe woman; — but 'I wonder, indeed, ſhe ſhould tell you 'nothing of it, for I have heard her ſpeak 'the kindeſt things of you.' — 'Well,— 'it is no matter,' replied Miſs Betſy, — 'farewel, Nanny.' — Then bid the chair-men go on.—The confuſion ſhe was in, hindered her from directing the chairmen where to go;—ſo they were carrying her home

home again, 'till ſhe ſaw herſelf at the end of the ſtreet where ſhe lived; but then recollecting all at once where ſhe had appointed to meet her brothers, ſhe ordered them to go to Golden-ſquare.

It ſeemed as if fate intereſted itſelf in a peculiar manner, for the mortification of this young lady; — every thing contributed to give her the moſt poignant ſhock her ſoul could poſſibly ſuſtain: — it was not enough that ſhe had heard the cruel tidings of what ſhe looked upon as the greateſt of misfortunes, her eyes muſt alſo be witneſs of the ſtabbing confirmation: —the place of ſale was within two houſes of Sir Bazil's; but as ſhe had never heard where that gentleman lived, could have no apprehenſions of the ſpectacle ſhe was to be preſented with. — On her chair turning into the ſquare, ſhe ſaw that ſide of it, to which ſhe had directed the men to carry her, crowded with coaches, horſes, and a great concourſe of people, ſome waiting for the bridal bounty, but more as idle ſpectators. ——— At firſt, ſhe imagined it was on the account of the ſale, but the ſame inſtant almoſt ſhewed her her miſtake.

Several footmen with wedding favours in their hats, two of whom ſhe knew by their

their faces, as well as by their liveries, belonged to Mr. Trueworth, were juſt mounting their horſes :— the crowd was ſo thick about the door, that it was with ſome difficulty the chair paſſed on, and ſhe had an opportunity of ſeeing much more than ſhe deſired.--There were three coaches and ſix:—in the firſt, went Sir Bazil and the new-made Lady Loveit, the father of Miſs Mabel, and a young lady whom Miſs Betſy had ſometimes ſeen in her company:—in the ſecond were ſeated Mr. Trueworth, his bride, Mrs. Wellair, and a grave old gentleman;—the third was filled by four maid ſervants, and the two valet de chambres of the two bridegrooms, with a great deal of luggage before and behind.—The ladies and gentlemen were all in extreme rich riding habits, and the footmen, eleven in number, being all in new liveries, and ſpruce fellows, the whole cavalcade altogether made a very genteel appearance.

Miſs Betſy, in ſpite of the commotions in her breaſt, could not forbear ſtanding a little in the hall, after ſhe had got out of her chair, 'till the whole had paſſed,--- 'Well,' ſaid ſhe to herſelf, with a deep ſigh, 'all is over, and I muſt think no 'more of Trueworth ; ----- but where-'fore am I thus alarmed ? — He has 'long

'long ſince been loſt to me, nor did I 'love him.'

She aſſumed all the courage her pride could ſupply her with, and had tolerably compoſed herſelf before ſhe went up into the ſale-room; — yet not ſo much but a paleneſs, mixed with a certain confuſion, appeared in her countenance. Mr. Munden, who happened to be there, as well as her brothers, took notice of it, and aſked, if ſhe was not well? To which ſhe replied, with an uncommon preſence of mind, that ſhe was in perfect health, but had been frightened as ſhe came along, by a great black ox, who, by the careleſsneſs of the driver, had like to have run his horns quite into the chair. — Mr. Munden, who never wanted politeneſs, and knew how to put on the moſt tender air whenever he pleaſed, expreſſed an infinity of concern for the accident ſhe mentioned; and this behaviour in him ſhe either reliſhed very well, or ſeemed to do ſo;

What credit her brothers gave to the ſtory of the ox is uncertain: — they, as well as all the company in the room, had been drawn to the windows, by the noiſe of the cavalcade, which had ſet out from Sir Bazil's.—Every one was talking of it when

when Miſs Betſy entered, and 'tis very probable the two Mr. Thoughtleſſes might imagine it had an effect upon her, in ſpite of the indifference ſhe had always pretended; — they were, however, too prudent to take any notice, eſpecially as Mr. Munden was preſent.

Whatever were the troubles of this young lady, her ſpirits enabled her to conceal them, and ſhe gave her opinion of the goods to be diſpoſed of, with as much exactitude, as if her mind had been taken up with no other thing.

Mr. Thoughtleſs made a purchaſe of the twelve Cæſars in bronze, and two fruit pieces of Varelſt's, and Mr. Munden, on Miſs Betſy's expreſſing her liking of two very large curious jars, bought them, and preſented them to her.

Nothing material paſſed here, but the ſale being over for that day, every one returned to their reſpective habitations, or wherever buſineſs, or inclination called them.

End of the THIRD VOLUME.